THE

GYPSIES OF THE DANES' DIKE.

A STORY OF

HEDGE-SIDE LIFE IN ENGLAND,

IN THE YEAR 1855.

By GEORGE S. PHILLIPS.

(JANUARY SEARLE.)

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To

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW,

This Book is Dedicated

BY

ONE WHO LOVES AND HONORS HIM.

PREFACE.

THIS book, although the characters, incidents, and actions represented in it are, for the most part, fictitious, may be accepted, in truth and honor, as a literal reflex of wayside life in England. Those who have traversed the scenery which is the background of the story will hardly fail to recognize it as the enchanted ground of their knapsack-wanderings, in times, it may be, long since gone by. The author, during his connection with a great literary association in Yorkshire, — the lectureship of which he once had the honor to hold, — undertook to throw a chain of libraries, reading-rooms, and schools for grown-up people in the dales of Yorkshire, and between York City and the seaboard eastward. And whilst he was engaged in a work of this sort amongst the fishermen of Flamboro' Head, he fell in with a large colony of Gypsies, who were encamped in the celebrated Danes' Dike, and along the heights overlooking the German Ocean.

In a few days, so good an understanding existed between the Leeds Bookman, as he was called, and these wild dwellers out of doors, that he obtained permission to pitch a tent of his own in their midst. This was the beginning of an intimacy with these people which lasted, more or less, for two years, and during which the author had a good opportunity of getting a favorable insight into Gypsy life and character.

There ought to be another meaning in the story itself — such as it is — than that which floats on the surface of it; and for the rest, it will be found to contain some unusual literary episodes, although they were inserted there not without design and a high intention.

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THE

GYPSIES OF THE DANES' DIKE.

CHAPTER I.

PUPPY-DOG SATAN, AND THE "JOLLY PIRATE."

"HALLOO, big Ishmael! What for now, big blackamoor Ishmael Toon? What has the pup done that you belabor him so hard?" quoth I, as, issuing from my tent, I confronted the tall, gaunt figure of the gypsy, his eyes like coals of fire, and his black hair streaming in disordered ringlets over his swarthy face and broad shoulders.

"Done! Master Geordie," he replied, nearly out of breath, and half ashamed of himself into the bargain; "done! why he 's worried Tibby the terrier; fair strangled him all out, and yonder he lies, heels up'ards, in the Danes' Dike, never to hunt hare, or burrow rabbit, or fetch barndoor fowl to the Rommany tents no more."

And as he finished his explanation, he turned his vicious eyes upon the puppy-dog, as he lay crouching on the grass, half inclined, I thought, to use his crabstick again over the poor brute's carcass. So I said to him: "Well, big Toon, when did you learn to take a beating quietly from any second or bystander, after, and because, you had pommelled your man to his heart's content? This is not ring justice, Ishmael Toon, and no one of your tribe would stand by and see it done to you."

"But Tibby, Master Geordie! good book-talking Master Geordie!" in his most coaxing manner; "think of poor Tibby, the best dog we 've ever raised; so slick and purty, so nat'ral marked, real black and tan, and with a muzzle like a pictur, and ivories long and sharp as nails, and a nose that never struck a false scent. By the Great Name! it 's enough to turn the airth to think on 't. Poor Tibby!" he continued, and with a pathos that touched me deeply,

"he will never again lie at my feet, or welcome me back to my kindred, or lick my face, or eat his crust from my hand!"

Saying which this half-savage dweller by the waysides leaned on his crab, hung down his head, and fairly quivered with emotions which he strove hard to suppress. So I broke in: "But seeing that it was done in fair fighting, mine gaffer Toon, how is poor Satan here any way to blame? It was lick or be licked, with both of them, and puppy Satan preferred the first. A bull-mastiff, young or old, never gives in. It 's the nature of the brute."

Meanwhile Satan, the bull-mastiff pup, had crawled to my feet, as if conscious that I was pleading his part, and that I thought better of him than big Toon did; and so I spoke kindly to the dumb brute, and bade him cheer up and be a good dog, and take to better ways, — all which he seemed, by the friendly motions of his tail and the half-serious, half-comical leers which played in the corners of his eyes, as he looked up into my face, to understand quite as well as fighting. I took a fancy to the dog. He was a fine beast, not fully grown, but very powerful and well proportioned. He showed his bull blood most in the head, which was massive, grand, and noble; his jaws were of enormous strength, and fully armed with tearers and grinders, which might have cracked the leg of an ox. His chest was broad, deep, and ample, and his muscular shoulders and forelegs — which last were bowed so that a wheelbarrow might almost run through them — were perfect in their conformation. His carcass was finely fashioned, tapering slightly towards the tail, where the bull prevailed again, and finished with magnificent hind-quarters and legs, such as dog-possessed Landseer would, in the dog-days, at least have worshipped as the incarnation of canine beauty. Add to this structure a covering of soft, glossy skin; a matchless brindle, — tawny-colored and striped with black, — and Satan, the puppy dog stands before you.

"Well, bully woe-begone," I resumed, "it 's no use grumbling over what can't be helped, although I 'm sorry for poor Tibby's fate; and you can't bring Tibby to life again by killing this ugly whelp as a sacrifice to his memory. So come down to the Jolly Pirate, and I 'll stand treat for a pot of ale. Tibby shall have a wet funeral, and pup Satan, here, a new master. What, ho! old fellow! with your black jowl and evil blinkers, will you serve me for love and grub, like a true devil, or follow the heels of big Toon for more lickings and worse luck?"

The sagacious brute, thus appealed to, jumped up on all fours,

sprang forward and backward, bounded, barked, and described all sorts of circles and semicircles, in token of his willingness to make a bargain with me. So I took him into service forthwith, and bully Toon and I ascended the hill towards the public-house which lay in the vale below.

We left the tents on our left hand; there were six in all, including my own, which I had pitched under the shadow of a great beech-tree, close to a little brook which ran babbling over the white pebbles, and singing amongst the water-weeds and tiger-lilies, all the way down to the Danes' Dike, where the tall trees and thick brambles hid it from the eye; although I knew well enough that it sang itself into the sea adjacent, where all its fairy woodland melodies were lost in the mighty roar of the brine. Some twenty men, women, and children composed the gypsy village; about one half of whom were absent upon foraging expeditions in the neighboring towns and hamlets, or grinding knives and mending chairs, pots, and pans, at the country farm-houses and cottages. The men who were left behind were lying lazily on the grass, smoking short pipes, or playing and tumbling in the sheer wantonness of brute strength; whilst the women sat at the doors of the tents, some of the youngest in colored shawls and straw bonnets, as if ready for a journey, and others, older, in rags which did but half cover their swarthy nakedness, whilst their black hair hung in Eastern profusion over their backs and shoulders. One large mastiff, a lurcher, and two bull-dogs were lying in the sunshine close to the tents. Our old granny, Mabel, was boiling the iron pot, supported by cross-sticks, over a roaring fire, the fuel for which was stolen from the rotten hedgerows hard by; and troops of children, barefooted, barelegged, and nearly naked, were romping around her. Three carts, placed in the middle of the semicircle which formed the encampment, were converted, by the help of tarpauling and canvas, into so many tents, and the patriarchal horses and asses were grazing scanty food in the neighboring lanes.

We stopped for a moment at the top of the hill, and gazed upon the scene below. We saw the smoke of the camp-fire rising amongst the tree-tops; the wide expanded landscape; the romantic, deep, almost inaccessible Danes' Dike, — so called, because the doughty, raw-boned Danish sea-pirates are said to have dug it right across the peninsula, which they thus converted for their own purposes of security into an island; the Dike's mouths on either side opening their huge gullets to the sea, whose roar we could now distinctly hear in

the distance. Big Ishmael, however, cared nothing for the landscape; his heart was with poor Tibby, lying stiff and cold in the Northman's fosse, and thus he apostrophized: "I tell you what, Master Geordie, it may n't be the right thing for a man of blood to fash so arter a dumb dog, but devil's in me if I can forget the purty beast that was so knowin' and clever, and down to moves. O the downy little black tan! O the fond little black tan! Master Geordie! It makes me feel as queer as a Rommany buryin', to think I shall never see him at his tricks no more."

"Cheer up! bully Toon! You take on almighty hard about the beast, as if there was n't another in the world," I replied.

"No more there is, Master Geordie! no more there is the like of poor Tibby, — the fond, purty thing! In all these shires I 've never knowed one could match him. He never sent the game wide, but driv it all into the field-net, or into the snares in the hedge-gaps, just as the bully boys wanted him. And for roosters! — O, he was foxy, — was poor dead Tibby!"

I bantered the big child in all kinds of lingo which I thought might touch his pride and shake him out of his funereal humor, but all to no purpose. So we descended the hill in silence, and made straight for Flamboro' village, which, at that time, consisted of a few miserable huts, occupied by fishermen, whose ancestors were, in all probability, those big-boned, huge-skulled sea-kings of Denmark, before alluded to as the conquerors and masters of this bold, rocky headland. Once or twice we stopped a moment to talk with Jack, son of Jack, and Jack, son of Jack's son, as they sat mending their nets by the door-steps; for big Toon was well known to these piscators of the deep.

The Jolly Pirate was situated by the roadside, a mile from the village, and about four hundred yards from the snug little bay called the "North Sea," upon whose high, sloping beach the fishermen, after their excursions, dragged their boats, to secure them from storms and breakers. Big Toon's throat was very dry, he said, as we entered the primitive hostel, kept by Polly Dradda, of this parish. There was but one room in it, which was open, with all its black, grimy rafters, up to the roof-tree. Polly sat in an old rush arm-chair, with her nightcap on her head, a short pipe in her mouth, and a pot of ale by her side, ensconced in the ample chimney-nook. Wood and peat were burning upon the comfortable hearthstone, and a long, pendulous pot-hook was suspended over the fire by an iron bar, which ran from wall to wall, athwart the chimney

opening. Three legs supported a slab of rough-hewn oak, which called itself the table of commons and hospitality. Another chair, save toping Polly's, there was not in all the mansion, but, instead, were rude planks for seats, fastened by stakes into the unbricked, naked floor. One piece of furniture there was, however, which seemed sadly out of place in the squalor and savagery of Polly's hostel. It was a large glass case full of stuffed birds, whose living *habitat* was clearly the region round Flamboro' Head. How came they here? What was their history? These were the natural questions which started in my mind; but the pot of ale was the first, indispensable, and Toon thought, natural thing, coming in its own right before either question or answer. So I wished the old crone good morning, and called for the ale.

"And who be ye?" she said, with an ineffable Satanic disdain expressed in her whole countenance, and more especially in the extra upturning of her blazing red snub nose: "Who be ye, I sud like to know, that comes into honest folks's housen, disturbin' their rest and drinkin's, and askin' for pots o' ale as if they grode on the cliff-tops. None of your gypsy tricks wi' me, my cap-a-dandies! but if you want to wet your peepers, I maun see the dubs for the liquor. So fumble the sheep-skin, and out wi' um, and meck no bones on't."

Big Toon's wrath got up like a storm at this most courteous welcome of the tawny strangers, — and I make the word tawny applicable to us both, because, being of Norman origin, with a cross of the ancient British blood in me, I am naturally dark, and have the gypsy eyes and hair; which, added to the dress I then wore, — a velvet shooting-coat, namely, a dog-skin cap and waistcoat, and corduroy breeches, with leather gaiters and tight-laced water-boots, — gave me altogether a gypsy appearance. At all events, the compliment of mine hostess was intended for me as well as big Toon, and I was not a little amused to hear my tiny manikin do his swearings over it, although the reader might not be edified with them at second hand; indeed, he only made matters worse with Polly, who threatened to poker and turn out the giant, by mere force of her withered arms. Whereupon I interposed: "Hold your clapper, big Toon! And you, good mother of the pot-boys, take your ease in your own inn, and smoke your pipe out in peace and with good civilities, if you can. We are but a couple of rogues who live by poaching and house-breaking, it is true, but as you sell good beer at the Jolly Pirate, for good money, to dry throats, I suppose you won't refuse to fill a foamer for a white bobby, and give the true Christian change; so there 's the shiner!"

"Hear him!" cried the old hag; "hear the new gypsy parson! Hear how he talks! Where did you get your book larnin' from, mister jack-a-napes? O, you 're a fine feller, I 'll warrant me, now, you are. And who said that Polly Dradda ever kept the liquor from the dry throat when the dubs was there? Hand it over here, ye crinky-cranky son of tinder-box, and let me look at the color o' t. None o' your tricks wi' Polly Dradda. Ah!" she added, after due examination, and very carefully ringing it, "it 's all right, that music is, and may be ye be better chaps than I took ye for. The shiner 's all right anyhow, and ye shall ha' the beer." So saying, she gathered up her bones, and taking an old-fashioned pewter-pot from the chimney wall, vanished behind a blanket, which was her proscenium both to the beer-barrel and the bed-roost. She speedily reappeared, bragging and praising the beer, which foamed in all its drunken glory over the rim of the dull and sottish pewter.

"And now, big Toon, drink for your life, man, and drown the memory of our good mother's tongue here, along with poor Tibby's in the dike."

"A rot on the good mother, Master Geordie," he shouted. "A rot on thee, old hell hag," he added, turning to the dame in volcanic fury. "She go down in the same drink of God Almighty's ale with my purty Tibby! O Master Geordie, there 's no book larning in that talk!" And Toon drained the pot.

"Bring another quart, mother," I said, with emphasis, apprehending another storm after big Toon's speech. "Bring another quart, and don't mind this little infant's gabble. He 's not right in his head; the last gale of wind blew a slate off it, and he 's been a bit moony ever since."

"Cracked is he?" said she, laying hold of the empty pot and looking up maliciously into Toon's face; "cracked are ye, ye black loon! And that 's why ye curse the good mother, is it? Now," she added, swinging the cup high above his head, "if I ain't sore mind to gie ye a taste of the pewter for your daft slang."

And I believe the beldame would have eased her sore mind in that particular way if I had n't stayed her hand, and plied her with much soothing gammon. Baby Toon, however, never moved a limb, or took the least notice of the raving crone, but sat there in scornful silence, thinking, no doubt, of poor Tibby and her downy ways, the purty beast!

When the quart pot was replenished, the old dame set it down before me on the oak table.

"And what for now should n't ye drink, you bitter-sweet, as well as your big pal, I should like to know?" she asked. "Is only one throat dry in the company, or is n't there good measure of a pint apiece in the pot?"

"All right, mother," I replied; "pass it on to my tender chicken there; he likes its savor, and the warmth of it will do the cockles of his heart good. I never drink such common stuff. My wine was brewed in paradise, if you ever heard of such a place, and the first man that tapped it was old Adam the gardener."

"What 's the fool palaverin about, I sud like to know?" she replied, eyeing me with a curious, baffled look, as if she did n't quite understand me. "A Rommany spalpeen, and shirk the drinkin's! Tell that gammon to the marines."

"Never you mind that, old woman, — pass the pot on there, and bring me a screw of bacca."

"Who ever heerd the like, in the Lord's name, before? Pass the cup, and you no drink on 't!" And so saying she hobbled away for the tobacco, shaking her head with ominous meanings.

After I had filled my pipe, and spoke a Christian word to poor old Satan, who lay quietly under the plank settle, wondering, between sleep and wake, what all this hubbub meant, and whether it was likely he should be wanted shortly, I rose and walked up to the case of stuffed birds, intending, by hook or crook, to come at their history. There were sea-parrots, gulls, and the other ordinary birds of the neighborhood, ranged in well-balanced picturing round a real *rara avis in terris*, a fine specimen of the almost fabulous black swan. The stuffing of the group was not in the best style, but the arrangement was good, and I heartily admired the little collection; and all the more because I found it in the possession of such a callous earth-grub as Polly Dradda seemed to be, and had mainly proved herself to be. As I continued my examination, the crone of the fireplace, this two-gendered cock of the Jolly Pirate, called to me across the room to come away from her *lares*, and not go "speering about there, anent things above a tawny's apprehension."

"Well said, old chimney witch," I replied; "well said and all out, like a surly devil's dam as you are. But I like the looks of these pretty things, — they 're so nat'ral like, and sit here just for all the world as they used to do when they were alive and flying, and had the range of the rocks to take their ease in. And may I eat granite for the next fortnight if ever I saw such a jolly fine bird as his black nob here. What do ye call him, mother?"

"What good will it do the like o' ye to know; ye thieven Jack-o-peep? Ye never shot or snared a bird o' that feather, nor never will; nor him nother, mayhap, and wus luck to the day as shot that king-o'-dainties on Speighton crags."

O, O, thought I, earthed at last are you, thou beautiful, flinty mother fox! So there is a helm to your crazy ship, with its cargo of devil's lumber, is there? You, too, have got a corner in your heart that holds some secret and sacred thing, eh? The "him" who shot this bird holds the key to whatsoever is good and womanly in you, Polly Dradda, if by Heaven's permission there be any qualities of this kind not utterly defaced in the boulder stone which you would call your "heart," I suppose. Let us try the lock and see. And with these rapid thoughts floating before me I replied: "I, mother! I shoot a bird like that! why I never looked on the like of him before, and maybe never shall again. He must have been a rare chap, with a keen, bright eye in his head, who brought that big beauty to the ground."

"Ye may say that, ye may well say that, ye ill-favored tyke! There 's no lad on all the head fit to stand in his shoon. He war as strite as a young poplin tree, and as handy with his fists as the best tawny ye 've got in the 'campment; and no chap in these parts could fling him in the wrastling ring, or beat him at the foot-race, or wark a cobel, or shoot, or fish, wi' the likes o' him. Wae 's me! he 's left his old mother many a long year, and gone across seas to Ingies, and I shall never see him no more."

Here the old woman bent her head upon her hands, and sobbed audibly, in her agony of these recollections, and the consciousness that all was lost to her forever. And here also, big Toon, roused from his apathy by the last words of the old crone as she writhed with the pain of her wounds on this old cross of her Calvary, started up in undisguised amazement, his whole face burning with honest sympathy, and at two strides stood before the stricken woman, gazing on her for a few moments as if half afraid to disturb her, and yet resolute to speak to her.

"Mother," he said at last, she, in her turn, looking up, and staring at him with the same eyes of wonderment, "Mother, I spoke as a tawny feller to you just now, in hedgeside lingo, swearing at you and calling you ill names; and I cussed you because I thought you 'd no nat'ral feelings, and did n't care for anything but the rowdy dubs, whilst I was full up to the throat in kinder woman's chaffer about my purty dog Tibby lying dead in the dike; and now I find that you 've

got a dog Tibby dead and gone too; and you never will see him no more; so I 'm sorry, and here 's my flipper on it." So saying, the big brute took the old woman's wizened hand in his mighty grasp and shook it as the storm blast shakes the dead pine, until I cried pitifully, "Enough, enough, big Toon!" for I was afraid he would shake her crazy bones out of their oilless sockets. She, poor baggage, was moved more than I expected by Toon's generous sympathy, and ended by inviting him to drink a pot of beer with her, which he very willingly assented to.

We returned to the encampment better friends with mine hostess than when we first entered her delicate hostel; and big Toon gradually grew more cheerful and reconciled to the loss of his dog as the day advanced; and for myself, I may say that I grew more attached to puppy-dog Satan, fondling him a good deal, and much to his satisfaction, on our way homeward.

CHAPTER II.

MYRA, THE PROPHETESS.

IT was evening when we approached the camp, and again we rested awhile on the hill-top, to watch the setting sun. Tiny Toon was not much impressed by the splendor of the landscape, as it lay stretched in golden glory before us; neither was he affected by the scenery of the heavens, its cloud-pomp and floods of wondrous coloring. He thought it would prove a fine night for poaching, and he was only sad because Tibby could not enjoy the sport with his bully boys. Up from the rocks below came the muffled boom and roar of the great sea, as it rolled its waves at their stony feet; the great sea with its multitudinous voices and dread primeval solitudes, mysteries, and solemnities, before which the mightiest are impotent, and the divinest oracles are dumb as in the presence of the Infinite Majesty. So felt not big Toon, for he gazed wistfully upon the camp-fires below, thinking of his evening meal, — which, seeing that he had starved since breakfast time, was not to be wondered at in the carnal child, — and to fill up the time which must elapse before he should be seriously seated for eating — that great work of human necessity — he filled his pipe with the precious weed and began imperturbably to smoke, as if all nature were made of the same material, and he were mocking its fabulous, illusory stability. In a few minutes we were in the encampment, and the sound of old Hiram's fiddle, mingled with laughter, dance, and song, broke, I thought, somewhat profanely upon the stillness of the pious evening. Piety, however, had nothing to do with my Rommany friends; they had not yet grown into that atmosphere, but lived in the brute domain of Nature, loving her wild forms and grim realities, her pot-provender and uses, with the affection of savages. They were, however, as happy as they could be. No state politics, nor religious disputes, nor theory about the immortality of the soul; no fiery visions of the world to come, or the blessed life of heaven, troubled their sleep or digestion. The disease of thought, indeed, was unknown amongst them. They were genuine autochthons, strong and vigorous in life

and limb, and sun and moon and stars and wind and weather were friendly to them. And I have found that Nature, in dealing out her compensations, makes no unreasonable conditions to her children, and insists neither upon the highest nor the lowest life in any man, but regulates her rewards and punishments according to the obedience or disobedience which each one of us pays to the laws which he recognizes as highest. And hence, in her even-handed justice to my Rommany pals, she made them very happy, according to their ideas of happiness. Old Hiram sat upon the stump of a tree, playing energetically a jig tune, to which eight or ten pairs of feet were as vigorously dancing. The jolly minstrel was evidently in his element, and so were all the rest of that motley company. He, however, with his one eye and wooden leg, was the special man, who, by his grimaces and the cunning of his rapid fingers, put the flying feet into these ecstatic motions. No other person or fiddle could have done the like; and no wonder, therefore, that he was so great a favorite. He had been away from the tribe, wandering about the country from fair to fair, for six weeks, and had returned only an hour ago, playing his fiddle all down the road and straight into the encampment, amidst sundry whoops of joy, and tantrums of his wooden leg. Big Toon gave him a shout of recognition, as he danced across the green towards the door of granny Mabel's tent, and in the region of the blazing fire and boiling pot. Mabel was in the act of lighting her pipe with a burnt stick, as Toon squatted himself down before her.

"Where have you been these four hours, Ishmael Toon?" she asked, "letting the pot boil to waste, and the dainty dandy simmer to rags? You don't deserve a smell of the savory, let alone the sup and the bite; nor Master Geordie, there, nuther."

"Never you mind, granny, where we 've bin; but hand out the trenchers and ladle up his wattles. I 'll warrant his rags be better than his bones to two hungry tawnies."

"Well said, big Toon," I chimed in, for hunger bides no delay.

Old granny scolded and grumbled, but straightway prepared the meal; setting before us a big loaf of wheaten bread, some large onions, and "his wattles" served up in the soup which he had made. Now wattles was a fine game-cock, which, having strayed from his legitimate walk in the fields of the adjoining farmer, came to a sudden, mysterious, and, as I suspect, violent death, for his trespass. Be that as it may, however, he was very tender and good for the stomach, and, as such, was eaten, whether feloniously or otherwise. Pup-

py-dog Satan came in for the bones, and was thus made an accessory after the fact; that is, supposing the cock to have been feloniously killed, which does not freely appear in the indictment. A felony more or less, however, was of no consequence to him after his morning's murder, perpetrated in the Danes' Dike aforesaid. Nor, indeed, to us either, for we were hungry, and our consciences were not so tender as "his wattles." Mine, perhaps, ought to have been, but there was a doubt in the case, and the benefit thereof I gave — with some compunctions I confess — to the importunities of my appetite.

By the time we had finished our supper the dancing ceased, and Hiram came prodding along over the sward with a hop-step, with his fiddle under his arm, to our side of the camp, shaking hands alternately and lustily with big Toon and me, and ejaculating in his queer, grotesque manner, like a monkey who had seen the world. He was full, indeed, of monkey-tricks, of quips, cranks, jokes, fun, odd stories, and catches of quaint songs; and, withal, there was such a streaming, laughing, jovial good-humor in him, that it was right pleasant to see and hear him.

"Back again to the old tents, you see, boys; back again like a bad ha'penny; lively as ever, and kickin' wi' fun; and glad as a May morning to see my ancient coveys and flash pals and Rommany gals, and old granny Mabel, ugly and sable; and all the dogs and frogs; the bogs and snares and hares, and whatsumdevir will rhyme and won't, in all these parts, my hearts! With a rum-tum tiddy-idy hijo! Rum-tum tiddy-idy hum!" And here the mad minstrel began to dance capers as mad as his doggerel speech, scraping his fiddle the while and setting all the colony in motion again.

The moon by this time had risen bright and full in the sky, and the white mist, stealing slowly from the valley, enveloped the surrounding landscape, and gave a mysterious aspect to the coarse hedges and tall trees, and changed my dancing pals into finer than drawing-room folks, and flung an air of enchantment round the rude tents. Old Mabel looked a veritable witch, — half shadow, half substance, — brewing her baleful brewis over the fire, and big Toon, sitting within a yard of me, loomed out like the shadow of a colossal giant.

Presently Ikey-Jack, a young savage of sixteen, the best shot in the tents, and the stealthiest of poachers, came riding in through the mist on a he-haw donkey, which was laden with flagons of beer, brought from Polly Dradda's hostel, to the great joy of all the taw-

nies, who now gathered in force round the replenished fire, for a boozing night-cap.

"Well done, Ikey!" shouted one and all, as the supple lad poured out the foaming ale, and handed the bowl to Hiram, for the first drink. "And welcome back to the tents of Ishmael, old merry fellow!" cried Toon, who, as Mabel's eldest grandson, was boss of the family, and entitled to precedence, therefore, after the guest toast. And a merry welcome they made of it; the gypsy girls joining heartily in the chorus. Whilst they were thus carousing, I stole away with Satan, unperceived, to my tent, and striking a light with my portable German tinder-box, lit a candle which was contained in the neck of a glass bottle, fixed on the top of a hedge stake, driven fast into the soil. After writing for an hour, I made some preparations for a ramble I proposed to take on the morrow, and then, wrapping myself in my blanket, lay down to sleep. All was now still in the camp, and nothing broke the silence of the night except the solitary tramp of a horseman who rode past at full trot just as I had composed myself on the straw litter which served for my bed. One thing, however, puzzled me, and kept me awake. There was a little tawny girl belonging to the tribe, — a sister of big Toon's, — and about eighteen years of age, who had been absent from us for a fortnight, but upon what business I could neither divine nor learn; for old Mabel preserved a mysterious and provoking silence about it, and she alone seemed to be in possession of the secret. I had made a pet of this girl ever since I had been in the encampment, and had a real liking for her, for she was extremely beautiful, and modest also, and had such wild, sweet, winning ways with her, that I was delighted to have her near me. She used to come to meet me as I returned from my shooting or fishing excursions, my town business, or rambles after the "flints," as the gypsies called the rare antiquities which I grubbed up out of the adjacent fields; and she was always welcomed with as many kisses as she could carry on her cheeks and lips. I liked to kiss her. It put me in mind of pomegranates, Southern roses, and all the glowing, sweet-scented flowers in the warm gardens of the East. She was no dingy savage, good reader, although she dwelt in the tents of Ishmael, but a beauty that would have adorned a coronet. She was a brunette, handsomer than any girl I have ever seen who comes under that style and denomination. Her eyes were large, dark, and languishing, and full of fire and intense concentrated passion, which made me almost tremble, sometimes, as I gazed into their lustrous depths. Her hair

was black, — not dark, but *black*, — such as one sees occasionally in the gypsy tribes, as to color, although rarely as to texture, gloss, and undulating beauty. Her nose was finely formed, and the gently upturned nostril gave an expression of haughty dignity to her face, which the glowing mouth confirmed, whilst it tempered it into the most sunny sweetness. Add to this a bust of gorgeous development and a figure proportionate, in whose agile and bounding movements one seemed to realize the idea of a gazelle-womanhood, and my beautiful Myra is represented in words as she now stands before me in memory.

No wonder, you will say, that I could not sleep in the absence of this glorious vision; and perhaps it was not; but the vision did not haunt me so much as the mystery of her absence. For, strange as it may seem, I had not lost my heart to this beauty, nor thought of losing it. I admired her, and liked to pet her, and tell her stories and histories, and sing to her and hear her sing; but I had no deeper regard for her, nor indeed could have; for to mate with her, as she had been bred and taught, was out of the question; and I belong to that old-fashioned school of moralists — now held so vulgar and out of date — who look with horror upon any left-handed intercourse with the sex, — and so wife nor mistress could she by possibility have been of mine.

As I thus lay tossing in sleepless unrest, and thinking of my truant beauty, puppy-dog Satan gave a low growl, indicating that some foot, friendly or unfriendly, was astir on the greensward. I listened, but heard nothing. The pup, however, was very uneasy, although he was by no means angry, for, as he growled, he kept his head to the straw, and moved his tail about in sundry slow wags, as if, whilst warning the approach, he was greeting the footsteps of a friend. I raised myself slightly, and as I did so, the outer curtain of my tent was put aside, and a female figure entered, calling me by name.

"Myra!" I exclaimed, springing forward to meet her. "Is that in very truth your own self in the body of its flesh, or your ghost in its likeness?"

There was no need for a reply, for my pet beauty flew into my arms like a frightened bird, and such a giving and receiving of kisses, the reader, belike, never did see nor feel. She did not speak for some time, but bent over me, with her head upon my shoulders, and her hair falling around us both. She was much excited, and her bosom trembled against mine like a nest of disturbed nightingales. When she had partially recovered I would have struck a light, but

she objected, lest it should attract attention. So we seated ourselves in the straw.

"And now tell me, my pretty, frightened wanderer, where you have been, and why you come to see me at this unusual hour?"

"I ought to tell you, Geordie, and I came for that purpose; but I don't know how to begin."

"Why, what is the matter, dearie? Surely no harm has come to you?"

"No harm, Geordie, dear; and yet there might have been, if I had listened to all I heard."

"And what did you hear, my own little pet girl?"

"Oh!" said she, putting her arms round my neck, and hiding her face once more on my shoulder, "I cannot tell you, Geordie, dear; I cannot tell you!"

"Well, no matter, Myra, to-night; wait till you are more composed. Let us talk about something else now."

"But my heart is burning, and yet my tongue won't speak the words. O Geordie! what shall I do?"

"Wait awhile, dearie. You'll be quieter soon."

"Wait! I've waited night and day this week past,—a whole week, which seemed like a long life. Waited until I was parched to speak to you, Geordie, and now the words won't come."

I knew not what to say to the poor soul, so I let her rest without reply, and there was a long pause.

"O, I must speak, Geordie!" she burst out at last. "He wants me to marry him!"

"He," I replied, in amazement; "who is He?" And I will confess that I did n't half like the confession. It was no business of mine, truly; but Myra married, and evidently to somebody who was repugnant to her heart, was Myra in a new, and by no means unobjectional light. I was selfish, too, in my views of it. How could I pet her, and fondle her, and be a true, good brother to her, after my own fashion, if she belonged to some special person who might call her wife? Myra a wife! The thing was unreasonable, impossible, and, in short, could-not-be-able. But who was this dreadful He, whose name, like the sacred name of Om amongst the Brahmins, could not be expressed by any mere mortal, intelligible designation. "He! who *is* He, Myra?"

"Ay, indeed, who is He, but the greatest, whilst he lives, of all our race in the West."

"He! Why, he is an old man, Myra, fit to be your great-great-grandfather."

"Ay, woe 's the day, Geordie! I told him I could n't marry him, and then, when he pressed and threatened me, I told him that I would n't; and I won't, if he should use the poisoners to kill me."

"No fear of that, Myra, darling. So cheer up. You 're safe here, and no one shall harm a hair of your head, or force you to marry against your will, as long as I am a living man."

"Oh!" she cried, in a wild, piercing tone, which seemed to come from the very lowest depths of her soul, as if in that cry she had found relief for her agony and utterance for her gratitude. That wild, piercing cry has many a time since, in the silent watches of the night, echoed with its fatal meanings in my ears and heart; although I did not yet comprehend the depth of that Gethsemane of passion and bloody-sweat from whence it proceeded. I will not anticipate, however. Myra presently recovered, and I could feel the delight of her heart as she once more, at parting, pressed her lips to mine. When she was gone I fell into musings. Strange, thought I, that this Gypsy King, this almighty, irresponsible HE, should be so smitten with my darling favorite; that he should threaten and intimidate her, in order to force her to marry him. Almighty as he is, however, he will find that no easy thing to accomplish; and here I discovered again that I was getting warmly interested in the matter, so I tried to pooh-pooh that consideration, and went on in what I thought the most indifferent style. But here was a poser. How came Myra so fearfully excited when she spoke of it, and why did she hesitate, and yet long, as she said, to make the revelation to me? I knew she was impulsive, like the rest of her people, but I had never seen her affected in this way, nor to this extent, before. The thought of wedding this big pronoun HE was evidently like a crucifixion to her; but was it altogether because she disliked him, or because she liked or loved another? Here was the rub. And I confess that, after much cogitation, I came to the conclusion that it was the latter; and no sooner had I done so than her whole manner and painful utterance found an easy solution. But who was this other? Here was rub the second; and this time I could find no stone to break it. The child was so perfectly isolated, knew no one out of her kin, and was not likely to have fallen in love with any chance stranger whose fortune she might have told. I made up my mind to question her upon this point at our next interview; and with this resolution I turned round in my blanket and went to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXPEDITION OF FLINTS, AND THE BUTTERFLY-CATCHER.

THE morning dawned over the world in unusual pomp, even for a summer's sunrise, as I went out to perform my ablutions at the laughing brook hard by. The mists were already dispersing in the valley, and the rooks were cawing and the linnets singing in the hedge-rows, and the 'wildered lark, trailing his flight with music, rose higher and higher up the steeps of heaven, until he was lost in glory; and Granny Mabel, much to my satisfaction, was boiling the pot for breakfast.

"Good morrow to you, granny!" I exclaimed, walking up to the cross-sticks. "Always at your work, whoever else is idle. Where are all the bully boys and the purty girls?"

"Good morrow, Master Geordie! and a fine good morrow it be, though ye're late i' the day for seein on't. The lads are all away for a airin and a picken; some at the North Sea for fish, some i' the lane for chances, and some i' the fields for runners. The gals are a makin tatur-nets and other gimcracks for Bridlington fair, — and his prickles (hedge-hog) is nearly boiled, and the coffee ready for the makin."

"Right good news, granny! for I have a way of my own to-day, and must needs be soon afoot! What news of Myra?"

"Who told you there was any news of Myra, Master Geordie? Ever sin the lass set back to the tents it's been nothin but Myra in your mouth, Master Geordie; as if there was nather grass nor corn, nor prog, nor drinkins, morn nor eve, left in her wake, but she'd just ta'en 'em all along wi' her."

"Well, granny, you may keep your secret, and may you get fat on it. She'll come back again with all she's ta'en away, I dare be bound, when she's tired of gadding."

At this moment, Myra, as I expected, came out of the tent, and met me as if I had seen her now for the first time after her return. Old granny mumbled and growled, but I knew she was not sorry to

see us meet so "purtily," for Myra was the flower of her old age, and the light of her eyes.

"Get your callow chum his breakfast then, ye black-eyed huzzy! sin ye hev showed him your face," she said, and Myra, nothing loath, did as she was bid.

"And when did the bird come back to her nest, granny?" I asked. "You kept it mighty secret between you."

"No secret at all, Master Geordie; she came wi' old Hiram the fiddler, and many 's the mile she walked, and a sorry footsore she got, — and roost was the best place for her after that, thought granny; so to roost she went, and that 's the clean breast on 't."

"Well, granny, now that the turkey 's crammed he 's going to walk off with his load. So good-by! and Myra, here my purty beauty, Myra! come give me one buss for a keepsake, and never mind old granny." Saying which, I got what I asked for, and stole another, amidst the laughter and loud hand-clapping of Poll and Meg, and the other swarthy damsels who heard the talk and saw the fun as they sat in the doors of the adjoining tents. The child-imps also took up the chorus, as I left the camp and struck over the fields with my wallet on my back, and puppy-dog Satan at my heels.

I was after the flints again, most curious reader; flints which I found mostly in ploughed fields, and which my friends, the gypsies, never could be induced to regard as anything better than the common rubbish which Nature had left behind her in her geological sweepings. And yet the British Museum was glad to find a place for them; and some of the proudest nobles in England, the old land of nobles, have not thought it beneath them to ask the poor Rommany chal to "honor" them with a contribution of these flints from his wallet. What then gave them their value, that they were thus prized and sought after? First of all, their antiquity. Antiquity! why, they were no older than other flints, I guess, — is the natural objection of the uninitiated reader, and, geologically speaking, they were not, but, historically, they were, because they were fashioned by human hands, and possessed, therefore, of a human interest. In short, they were the battle implements and domestic tools of the aborigines of the island; of those old Britons who, centuries before Cæsar had passed the Pillars of Hercules, and waved his eagles in triumph over the white cliffs of Albion, had lived and died upon this rocky headland. On this day I was more than usually lucky in my findings. I bagged four flint hatchets, two knives, in unusual preservation, a doubled-edged saw, eight arrow-heads, five sling-stones, and

one spear-head. I found most of these in the neighborhood of Speighton, after wandering about and grubbing for them until past noonday, when I found myself very tired, and so I sat down on the rocks facing the sea, and four hundred feet above it, to eat my dinner, a wild sense of freedom thrilling through me, and making me so happy that I could hardly hold myself in respectable bodily decorum. Around me bloomed the wild thyme, the purple heather, the golden gorse, and a profusion of daisies and other flowers, and flaunting grasses and darnels. Below me,

> "Calm as a slumbering babe,
> Tremendous ocean lay,"

dotted with ships and fishing-boats, and skimmed over by millions of sea-birds, who made their homes, during the summer months, amongst these crags of adamant. Boys, suspended by ropes over the dizzy and dreadful heights, were robbing them of their nests, and gunners were making havoc among them as they swept over the surface of the glassy waves below. The day was so bright, and the scene so beautiful, that I grew luxurious, and fairly revelled in it. To the right lay Flamboro' Head, with its light-house and romantic sea-caves; its architectural temples, and pillared arches, and towering columns; its innumerable inlets and basins, and monstrous overhanging cliffs, bearded with lichen and pendulous weeds. To the left lay the pretty fishing village of Filey, and beyond its long jetty of sunken rocks, now distinctly visible, rose the town and castle of Scarboro', the queen of English watering-places. I knew all the coast well from Hull, Hornsea, and Burlington, to Flamboro, Filey, and Scarboro', and from thence to Robin Hood's Bay, antique and romantic Whitby, Redcar, Hartlepool, Sunderland, and "canny Newcastle." And this local knowledge heightened my enjoyment, and gave the treacherous east coast a friendly aspect to me. I was in the humor, indeed, to be pleased with everything. I lay down on the grass and listened, delighted, to the buzzing insects, and the solemn bass of the gold-belted humble-bee, as he sailed past me laden with honey, on his homeward-bound voyage. And not the less did I enjoy my frolics with Satan, whom I began to look upon as a friend, and love with mighty likings and affections. And why not? There is no shame to humanity in such a confession, that I am aware of, unless it be in the fact that canine virtue is so solid and trustworthy.

On my return to the camp I made a steeple-chase cut to the Flamboro' village, whose venerable church on the hill served me as a

guide. The route was wet and marshy in some places, and covered with rush and sedge; but the landscape was alive with beauty, and Satan and I wandered over it with exulting spirits. Butterflies and moths were abundant, especially the white butterfly, and I saw several of the dainty peacock-tail specimens, arrayed in the gorgeous costume of their order. I had a long chase after one of them, over bog and brake and greensward, much to the annoyance of a couple of plovers, who, thinking, I suppose, that I was burglariously intent upon robbing their nest, wheeled after me wherever I went, now near and shamming weariness and broken wings, and doing all sorts of dodges to attract my attention, and now circling afar off and rapidly returning with loud, piteous "pe-wits! pe-wits!" I was fortunate enough to capture the bright and richly-colored insect; and whilst I was carefully bestowing it in my prog-box, and kneeling down for this purpose on a clump of odorous heather-blossoms, two ladies came suddenly upon me from a little dell hard by. One was young and very lovely, with large bright blue eyes, and a profusion of auburn ringlets, which gleamed with a true golden glory in the sunshine, and half hid her face in their lustrous shadows. She wore a white muslin dress and a large straw hat trimmed with blue ribbons. The other lady, who was much her senior, was of sharp and decided features, and possessed an eye of singular intelligence. She was dressed in half mourning, and, like her fair companion, carried a green butterfly-net in her hand. As I rose, the youngest came running up to me, her face all aglow with health and excitement, and without more preface asked to see the capture. I readily showed my fine fellow, and she as readily admired him. The elder lady also praised the unconscious insect, and asked what I meant to do with it, for, of course, she could not imagine that a Rommany vagabond should have any taste for a vagabond fly, or take other than a passing pleasure in its possession. Nor did I undeceive her, but replied that I was going to take him to the camp and nail him for a curiosity on the walls of my tent.

"O, but that would be cruel; you must kill him first, or he will suffer much pain, and flap all the color from his wings. Give me the box, and I'll kill him for you," which she did with a preparation of corrosive sublimate, I suppose.

"Thank you, pretty maiden!" said I, hiding myself in my gypsy character. "It's a gay insect, and old granny mayhap 'll sell it one day for the price of a pot o' beer, to some fine lady when she comes to get her fortin' told."

"Will you sell it, and cheat granny of the bargain, young man?" she asked, eyeing me at the same time very minutely.

"No, leddy; I never sells game o' this 'ere sort, but you 're welcome to it, as flowers in May, if you 'll take it."

"Well, I should certainly like it," she replied; "but you must take some acknowledgment for it."

"Not I, leddy; not a stiver! It 's a fitter thing for the like of you, nor me; and 'll look at home in your fine house, as if it was born there. So, please to take it."

Again she looked me inquisitively in the face, and finally took the butterfly, adding gayly: "Well, I suppose I must make it up to you by coming to have my fortune told amongst you. I dare say you can tell it quite truly, just as it will all happen."

"You should n't jest with the stars, leddy. They tell us all secrets; but they 're angry sometimes when folks make light talk about 'em; and then evil comes on 't, — and it would be a pity for evil to come to such a pretty face as yours."

The fair young creature laughed at the solemnity of my manner and my oracular speech, threatening to come and try the stars before long, as she bounded away with her companion.

Here was an adventure, the end of which who could tell? I, at all events, felt and knew, by an instinctive, mysterious consciousness, that this was not to be the end of it; that I should see that fair face again, and hold a nearer and sweeter communion with her than any which could arise out of a mere acquaintanceship. I say I felt and knew all this, as certainly as I felt the beating of my own heart. She would come to the tents to have her fortune told, and I should renew my acquaintance with her there, or elsewhere, before many days were gone. Was this presumption? No, and yes. No, because I relied upon the Agrippa's mirror, displayed by the occult oracle within me, wherein I saw the shadowy future conjured up by a power which cannot lie; and yes, because, humanly speaking, there was nothing — nor the slightest gleam of anything — to justify the mad certainty which took possession of me. We have all heard of love at first sight, and the genuflections and adorations, the chants and pæans which are the invariable accompaniments of this divine delirium; but my feelings towards this bright creature were not, at this time, those of love, but of presage, and the certainty of love in the future. There was a fatality in it which neither she nor I could get away from; for the threads of our destiny were spun in the paternal loins of the race, descending with their commission through

the infinite networks and labyrinths of human life, over time and space and the gulfs of death, down to this hour, and these seemingly inconsiderable persons and souls of ours. It was very strange, was it not, good reader, looked at through the camera-obscura of necessity, that a roving gypsy savage, and a laughing blue-eyed girl, a frivolous butterfly-catcher, not more, certainly, than seventeen years of age, should be of so much account in the universe, as to be held fast to its centre from the beginning of days, ere they were yet made manifest in human forms, and then, being so manifested, that they should meet on this fine moorland round Flamboro' Head, and feel, — one of them, at least, — for the first time, the working of the destined spell, through this long line of ancestral communication. And yet it is no more strange than true, both as history and metaphysics, true in the case of every son and daughter of Adam, however humble and lowly their lot, for we are all encompassed by the same wonders and mysteries, bound by the same laws and necessities, and actors in the same spiritual romance which underlies all life and the forms of life.

Full of these thoughts, and pervaded by an unusual calm, I entered the encampment, amidst shouts of welcome from the ragged pickaninnies who thronged around me, pulling my coat-tails and half climbing up my back, desiring to see what I had brought home in my wallet. They turned away, one and all, in great disappointment, as they beheld the old well-known flints, which I straightway deposited in my tent, and then crossed over to the fire, round which several of the men and women were grouped, and evidently in earnest talk with Granny Mabel. My appearance put a stop to their discourse, whatever it might have been, nor was there a trace of excitement in their features, although an ominous silence — such as every one must have observed in like circumstances when he has broken suddenly upon some exclusive conversation — prevailed amongst them. Big Toon was there, looking as grave as an owl; and one-eyed Hiram, with his fiddle carefully protected in a green bag, a good deal the worse for wear, lying by his side; and "Flaming Nosey," the prize-fighter, whom I have not before had the honor of introducing to the reader, a hero in his way, and a conqueror; for he had never been beaten, although he had fought a hundred battles, be the same more or less, and was in training to contest the belt for the championship of England. Here, too, was Tim, the knife-grinder, and two other younger brothers of big Toon, tall, stalwart fellows, made of oak and iron, whom the stoutest churl in all the country

side would have found too tough for his handling. Flaming Nosey, or "Old Red Nose," as I used to call him, was the first to break silence, handing me his pipe over the council-fire, and began telling me all sorts of stories about the "fancy," and the life they live in London, much to my instruction, although very little to my edification. For although I like the manly science of boxing, and got my training at Cambridge from no less a proficient than Charley Larkin, and although I am skilled also in the use of the broadsword and in fencing, so that I can say, with John Milton, who was a master of fencing, that I should fear nothing to match myself with the best; still I hate the brutal habits which professed bruisers acquire, and all their degrading vices and city associates. Flaming Nosey, however, belonged to the tribe, and was my chum, bruiser as he was; and I liked him for his strength and courage, and manliness of character. He was a man of prodigious strength, about five feet ten inches in height, and had a lion-like expression of face, which his red Roman nose did not at all impair, and a determination in the knitted eyebrows and compressed mouth, when he was excited, which betokened well enough of what stuff he was made. His eyes, however, were genial and kindly, and his ordinary manner was more than commonly gentle and quiet. Granny Mabel was very proud of her fighting child, and so indeed were all his kindred. Hiram had composed a song about him, which he often sung at nights when "red nose" was away on his professional duties, and the reader may be sure that it was not listened to without vociferous plaudits.

In spite of the effort that was made by one and all to appear jolly, and suppress all appearance of excitement, I could see that there was a slumbering latent fire underneath the talk and jest. More than once, too, I heard big Toon address his grandam in Rommany, a word or two only of which caught my ears, but sufficient to make me feel that they had important business to discuss, from which even their favorite Geordie must be excluded. So I presently pleaded the excuse of a hard day's walk, to betake myself to my tent, and so left them. My first thought was for Myra, whose absence from the group I had not failed to notice; and I wondered why she did not come out to meet me as her custom was, when I returned to the camp. I missed her sadly, and now more than ever, because I had no one to talk to. There was Ikey, however, sitting on a stone by the brook-side, close to my tent, and I stopped to speak to him. He had a rifle by his side, and was examining with evident pleasure a little bag of halfpence, each of which had a hole in it, so large that little else was left but the rim.

"Well, Ikey," I asked, "what treasures are you hoarding there?"

"Very good shots, Master Geordie; blowed the bullets through every one on 'em. Could n't do that last summer. Got the trick clean now"; and Ikey gave me a cunning leer, expressive of great self-satisfaction.

"But you don't mean to say that you shot a bullet through them coppers at a flying-shot, Ikey?"

"Yes, Master Geordie; got the trick now."

"Come, come, Ikey, them rigs won't run. Is your rifle loaded?"

"Yes, she be loaded, Master Geordie. Ikey tells no lies to his pals," he added, rising with the rifle in his hand, and fumbling in his pockets, one by one, in search, as it soon appeared, of a halfpenny, to convince me that he spoke the truth.

"Stand a little back, Master Geordie," he said quietly, placing the rifle in his left hand, and then with his right he tossed the coin flat in the air, fired, and brought it down fairly drilled like his other trophies.

"Well done, Ikey!" I exclaimed, in unaffected admiration, "that was a good shot, boy; and here 's a white Robert for you to buy more powder and ball with."

Ikey took the shilling with great glee, and was marching off with it in triumph, when I stopped him, and asked where Myra was.

"In granny's tent, Master Geordie. I seed her an hour agon, and she looked down in the dumps and had been a cryin'; and there 's a hell-pot brewin' over there," said he, pointing to the fire.

"Why, what 's the matter, Ikey? What 's Myra been crying for, and what 's up with the bully boys?"

Ikey shook his head, and either did not or pretended not to know. So I let him pass, and sitting down at the door of my tent lit my pipe. It wanted yet an hour of sundown, and the evening was as calm and beautiful as the day had been bright and sunny. I was not, as the reader may suppose, without my reflections; and the laughing butterfly-girl and my pet Myra were continually before me. I was troubled on Myra's account, and longed to know what was the matter with her, although I felt sure it was connected in some way with the story she had told me the night before. Whilst I was turning these things over in my mind, a gang of gypsies, five in number, came down the lane from Bridlington, driving a horse and two asses, all laden, before them. There was a simultaneous movement all along the tents, as if by a preconcerted signal; the group dispersed from the fire and disappeared, and old granny, big Toon, and Flam-

ing Nosey were the only persons left. A few minutes brought the strangers before the encampment, where they halted, and big Toon rose and went out to speak to them. What transpired I cannot say, for I was too far off to hear the parley; but the new-comers presently drove off accompanied by big Toon, towards the Danes' Dike, in a hollow of which they pitched their tents. Events were thickening and a crisis was clearly near at hand, for I knew that these tawnies had not come to our lodge without a purpose.

When big Toon returned, he stepped over to my tent and begged a pipe of tobacco to calm him, I could see, although he said nothing about that. I rallied him now about the strangers who had come to run away with his tents, and now about his dog Tibby, the "purty beast," whose ghost must have frightened him in the dike, he looked so glum and browny.

"No, no! Master Geordie," he replied; "my downy Tibby 'll never rise above ground more, nor his *fetch* nuther. He lies in a hole too deep for that, and the strangers won't run away wi' the tents nor their holdins whilst big Toon stands six foot in his breeches."

"What do the chaps want then, Ishmael?" I asked, "that they come here poaching on our manor grounds? It ain't civil in 'em, and its agin all road law and gypsy custom. What do they want, prowlin' about here in our wake?"

"Devil knows, Master Geordie; and Devil take um if they comes here wi' the evil eye in their heads. They 'll find big Toon and his pals no playthin's," he added, blowing the smoke fiercely through his mouth and nostrils, and rising to depart.

"Well, big un," I replied, "if you want an extra hand to help your tiny manikins to drive the tawnies into the sea, you know where to find it. Every stick helps the kindlin'."

"Ay, ay, Master Geordie; but tawnies' quarrels ain't for the likes of you to broggle wi'; and if they wants a skrimmage they 'll katch a scrammage."

So saying Toon walked away, and I took Satan for a stroll on the sea-beach, going the roadway down the dike, that I might not come across the strange camp. At the end of the dike, where the sea suddenly opens before the spectator in all its majesty, I sat down under the cliffs which rise here, clothed with wood and gorse on either side, above three hundred feet from the water level, and watched for rabbits, which abound in this region. I had not long to wait, for they came out of their burrows and from beneath the furze in scores, and I soon killed quite as many as I could carry away with

me. By this time the moon was up, and a thick, dense fog was rising in the dike, like the smoke from a thousand cannon. I was well acquainted, however, with the road; so I did not hurry, but shouldered the game over my gun and walked leisurely tentwards. I had not gone far, when, to my amazement, I met Myra all alone, her figure closely enveloped in a large gypsy cloak, so that I should scarcely have known her but for her voice, which to me was always sweet as music and always welcome.

"What are you doing here, my beautiful pet?" I asked, as she flung her arms round my neck, which, good reader, although you may laugh and shake your head and wink your north eye ever so knowingly over it, was my accustomed greeting with Myra, as I think I told you before; and it was surely a very natural, and particularly pleasant one; prized as such by me, more than most things on the face of the earth, because it was a guileless and sincere expression of feeling and affection; and I returned the same in like spirit, and with equal sincerity. She had seen me leave the encampment, and had followed me in the gloaming; for her heart was full, and she wanted to speak to me and unburden herself of the oppression which consumed her. The strangers, who were expected at the tents, had come from his amorous majesty, their king and master, to make formal overtures on his behalf for poor Myra; and although she knew her kinsmen would not give her up without her own consent, yet she had an indefinable dread of the savage embassy, as if they were the masters of her destiny. At any time, before my experiences of this day, I should have been inclined to laugh my beauty out of her superstitious forebodings, but now it was impossible. I knew too much; and my knowledge was a confirmation of the truth of her instincts. I could not bear to think of this, and yet I could not get away from it. Myra, however, should not be sacrificed without a struggle, let the fates threaten as they would. And so I comforted her as I best could, and tried to get her into another train of thinking.

"I don't wonder, Myra, dearie, that you dislike old Baal, and revolt at the thought of becoming his wife! but tell me now, my bright-eyed birdie, have you no other reason for disliking him than that he is old and ugly, and unfit to mate with a glowing beauty like you?"

"Hush, Geordie! O, dear Geordie, hush! and never ask me that question again, lest my heart should burst open before you, and reveal all its secrets."

"And suppose it should burst, Myra, which the Lord forbid! I 'm quite sure you 've no secrets in it which the Lord himself, and all his good creatures, might not see and welcome, for any evil there is in them."

"Evil, Geordie! No, there is no evil there; how could there be, when it is so full of love?"

My little girl did not mean to say this; the secret came out unconsciously, and in the enthusiasm of the moment; but out it was, and there was no recalling it. I respected her too much, however, to take advantage of it, and ceased to press her with further questions, at all events, as to the person whom she loved, merely replying: "Then you do love somebody, do you, Myra? And you 're full of love for him, too, are you? No half-and-half liking with you, I hear. Why, what a fool I have been not to see all this before."

"Love, Geordie! did I say that I loved? why, I did n't mean it, indeed I did n't; and yet it was true. I do love, and so wildly that I could take all the sea, and stars, and earth into my bosom, and then feel that this was nothing for such love as mine to embrace."

There was a confession, ladies; very florid and torrid, also, but as impersonable as love without any object could very well be. And yet Myra was no Platonist, but a burning Eastern beauty; and although she named no name, and hinted at no one as the recipient of her solar streams of affection, you may be sure that it was a living man she loved, and no will-o'-the-wisp of fancy.

"Well, Myra," I replied, "I hope you 'll be happy, whomsoever you love, and when you get married, that you 'll invite dear Geordie to the wedding."

"But I 'm not happy, and I never shall be happy, Geordie! O, never, never more!"

"Not when the wedding-day comes, Myra? Love is n't half such a good thing as I take it to be, if it can't work a miracle like that."

"Don't talk so lightly of the poor gypsy girl's sorrow, Geordie, dear. Her wedding-day will never come. I know it. The stars tell me of a different fate, — of pain, and agony, and death, — and my own heart bodes the same."

"Nonsense, darling, dark-eyed prophetess! You 've been too much excited lately, and see things with distempered eyes. I might as well indulge the same feelings, and prognosticate for myself a similar fate, because I happened to meet a pretty blue-eyed girl today, and fell desperately in love with her."

"You, Geordie!" she exclaimed, her whole frame shaking with

sudden and violent emotion. "Tell me, O tell me where you saw her!"

"But you frighten me, Myra. Pray be calm. There is nothing very terrible that I know of, nor very unreasonable either, in my falling in love with a pretty girl, — a laughing butterfly-catcher on the heath."

"O no," she said, "I am calm now, Geordie. I was very foolish to give way to my feelings. And yet it is so strange; I've dreamed of this for many nights past. You and the blue-eyed butterfly-catcher were always together; and so happy! whilst I sat by the wayside, dark, lonely, and hopeless, watching you with stony eyes, and a broken heart. I foresaw it all. And so let it be. The Great Name has ordained it."

She said this with so much earnestness and solemnity, and with such oracular inspiration, that I was strangely moved by it. And the more so, because her vision foretold what I felt so certainly would transpire; and what had, to a certain extent, already happened. I was silent, therefore, for some time, pondering the mysterious revelation and occurrence in my own mind; not without a feeling of shadowy awe at the thought that I should be placed in so direct and conscious a communication with invisible powers, whose purposes it was my destiny to fulfil. I confess that my spirit rebelled against such audacious bondage, and I seemed to hear all sorts of laughters and clapping of elfin hands around me, as if my impotent rage were particularly amusing to those unseen servitors who were the executive agents of the authority that subjugated me. And, indeed, there was ridiculous cause enough for this supermundane mirth, inasmuch as I felt my heart inclining more and more to the blue-eyed Psyche of the heath, even whilst my wrath was hottest, because I was compelled to do so. And did you feel nothing for poor Myra's misery, or seek to fathom it, with a view to her consolation? Yes, reader, I felt for her more than I can express, but I did not probe her heart for its secret; that I felt would be unbecoming, and a violation of the sanctities of Nature. And I knew her too well to seek to console her for an inconsolable sorrow. My heart, however, yearned towards her with a purer and holier feeling than I had yet experienced in her presence, or for her person, and I resolved from this time to love her in the light of that feeling, without disguise or reserve.

As we thus walked along in silence through the mist, Myra pressed my arm, and standing still, bade me listen. I did so, and heard

voices not far off, as if in angry dispute. I knew at once that we had lost our way and were within compass of the stranger gypsy's tent. Giving me another signal to remain quiet, the impassioned girl darted from my side in the direction of the voices, and was out of sight in a moment, before I had time to expostulate or to prevent her movements. I waited in considerable excitement for nearly a quarter of an hour, when she returned as suddenly as she went, and seizing my arm hurried me back the way we came, until arriving at an angle where the path took a sudden turn, we clambered the steep banks of the dike, and were soon in the open fields above, on which the moon, invisible below, was shining in all her glory. I questioned Myra in vain as to the conversation which she had heard; not a word could I get out of her, although I saw, in the rapidity and almost fury of her motions, that she was fearfully excited.

"I must leave you here," she said, as we approached the main road in the vicinity of the camp. "The tawny savages will soon be at Granny Mabel's tent, and I may be wanted. So good night, dearest Geordie!"

Taking a circuitous route I soon after reached my tent, and went straightway to bed, and fell asleep in the midst of many thoughts.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSASSIN ASSASSINATED.

I SUPPOSE that in this sleep I dreamed, for I have a distinct and vivid remembrance of being suddenly transported, as on the wings of a glorious resurrection, into a region of surpassing brightness and beauty, where flowers and music, statues and fountains, and undulating woodlands, made all the earth one delicious garden from sky to sky. Temples, upon whose altars burned perpetual incense, and whose ministering servants were gorgeous women, arrayed in such voluptuous garments that the ravished eyes swooned as in a drunken delirium over their beauty; and whatsoever could allure and charm the senses was there present in rank and tropical luxuriance. It seemed to me that I had already lived an immortal life in these gay and tumultuous scenes; amidst revels, riots, dancings, banquets, and the dear delights which are so precious to youth and those up-grown men who wear the aboriginal mask of nature; and it also seemed to me in my dream, as good John Bunyan says, that I was becoming satiated with these splendid fornications; and that voices within me, like deep calling unto deep, began to wail and cry aloud for light and liberty, in the pain of their long imprisonment. And then on a sudden I saw looking through the clouds of heaven a face full of celestial beauty, in whose blue, unfathomable eyes I read, as in a holy book, of things divine, and of such unspeakable glory, that I was carried away out of the body of this death, and rose triumphant into those hitherto inaccessible regions, while smoke and darkness covered the earth, its gorgeous palaces, thrones, and inhabitants; and angels shouted for joy at the great deliverance.

Such was my dream; but very different was the reality to which these noisy hurrahs of the delighted angels awoke me. I had been up in my sleep into the third or twenty-third heaven, as the case might be, according to the reckonings kept in that celestial navigation, and I was hurled down in my first waking moment into an abyss from which it seemed impossible for me to extricate myself, for I felt as though the Andes were pressing upon my body with all the weight

of their immeasurable bulk and longitude. I gasped for breath, and in my agony and struggle I arose half upright with what I saw, to my horror, by the misty moonlight, was a human head, in the grip of my two hands. A shudder as of death ran through me, and then with a bound I sprang from my bed, dashing the obscene thing with superhuman violence down at my feet. When my senses were sufficiently collected, I became aware that a dreadful tragedy had been enacted in my tent. Myra, like one transfixed, and holding converse with another world, stood at the foot of the bed; a long knife, which I felt was wet with blood, in her right hand. My puppy-dog Satan was fastened to the throat of the corpse which I had just cast from me, — for the man, whoever he was, was dead, and it was long before I could choke Satan off from his prey. By the time, however, that I had accomplished this, Myra was sufficiently calm and collected to explain these dramatic proceedings. During her absence from my side in the Danes' Dike on the preceding evening, she had overheard a conversation in which I was very deeply concerned; for it arose out of a plot to take away my life, if a certain proposed condition should make so pleasant a piece of business necessary to the success of their ultimate schemes. The particulars were these: it had been rumored, in the high courts of the Imperial Presence, that a strange "bolshin," — alien in blood and language to the gypsy race, — had, for nearly four months past, been dwelling in the tents of Ishmael, and that, through the exercise of potent and unknown sorceries he had charmed Ishmael's people into so great an attachment to his person, that one and all would, at any moment, willingly give up their own ghosts to secure the safety of his. And further, and which also gave weight to the same in his majesty's opinion, as interfering with his own regal affections and conscriptive rights, that this said alien had so bewitched the beauty of Ishmael's tribe, — the far-famed Myra, — that she was no longer herself, but possessed of an evil spirit, who was always haunting the alien, filled with a demoniac passion for him. And the absurd mind of his majesty, made still more absurd and idiotic by the imbecility of his pretensions to Myra, swallowed all this huge dose of black magic, and gave his instructions accordingly. Myra was to be sued for in due form, in the presence of her kindred, by ambassadors whom he would appoint for that purpose. If the mission were successful, they would carry off the pretty maiden, and leave the alien to his incantations; but if it proved a failure, they would know then of a surety that black magic was at the bottom of it, and the poor magician

must die! Not openly, but by stealth, in darkness and while he slept, lest being awake, he should rouse up all the demons of his Pandemonium to avenge the proposed outrage.

It was the revelation of this plot, gathered from the strange gypsies themselves, which flung Myra into such excitement on her return to me from their tents. And the brave, noble-minded girl heroically resolved to watch the proceedings of the enemies, and defeat their designs, and that, too, without enlisting an accomplice, or telling any one of her purpose. She would do this for her friend Geordie, and Geordie gratefully owes her a life. Accordingly the strangers came over to Granny Mabel's tent, and were received there by Toon, Flaming Nosey, Hiram, and the seniors of the tribe. After they had explained their business, there was a long pause, very deferential as it might have been interpreted, but also very awkward. At length Granny Mabel spoke: "Ishmael's kin," she said, "is n't good blud enough to mix wi' the king's, though for that matter they be older than the pyramids of the sacred land, and have no base crossin's in 'em. But the king sud look higher up the tree, we are ony branches just aboon the roots, and all the birds in our nests we want to keep. The king may tak our thanks, but Myra must n't leave her old grandam and the tents which bred her. What says Ishmael Toon?"

"Faix, granny, I say as you do. We 're much obliged to the king because he wants to take our purty Myra away from her kinsmen, but we likes her too well ourselves to part wi' her, unless Nosey here can find a speech to persuade us."

"Me, big un!" quoth Nosey, fairly staggered at this sudden appeal to his oratory in such a cause. "Damme, man, if it was left to me I 'd fight for the little gal agin all the Devils down'ards sooner nor she should be run away wi'; and that 's Flaming Nosey's opinion, my masters, and no offence meant."

"Well, I never, that 's clever!" interrupted Hiram, stroking his wooden leg and laughing all over like a wild-jay in the woods "Who ever heerd or speered the like of a case with that 'ere face? What are ye all talkin' about, so stout? Are ye all mad to say 'yes' or 'no,' Myra shall, or shan't go. How do you know? Let the jade, use her own spade."

"Ay, ay," cried one of the imperial embassy, "let the maiden answer for herself, and we shall be satisfied."

Myra suddenly appeared in their midst, coming from the inner tent. "Well," she exclaimed proudly, "what is it you want with

Myra? Has your master not received from me already his answer, that you come here to torment me again? What I told him I now tell you, that I will have nothing to do with him. I desire to live my time in my own way. Go, therefore, and repeat what I say, that your master's love may turn to a hate as deep as that with which I hate him and you." Saying which she left them all in amazement; and shortly after the pow-wow broke up, and the strangers made for their tents. Not faster, however, than Myra followed them.

"Heard ye ever the like o' that she devil?" said one.

"She 's certainly 'witched," said another; "did ye see how her eyes shot flames?"

"He must die to-night," said a third, in a hoarse, savage, and croaking voice. "Where 's Juga?"

"Here I be," was the answer.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Away then, and the Devil speed you."

Myra was instantly on the assassin's track; her first impulse being to kill him as he sped on his murderous errand, which would have been easy to do under cover of the thick shrouding mist. She resolved, however, to take a more retributive vengeance, and flew, rather than ran, to Geordie's tent, in the folds of which she crouched, waiting for her prey. Satan seemed to know her, for he gave no sign; and all was silent as the grave. In a few moments Juga approached, stealing, cat-like, nearer and nearer, until at last he entered the door, within an inch of Myra's hand. She followed him like his shadow, and as noiselessly. Another step and he was within reach of his victim. He stooped down, in the act of bending over him, while simultaneously Myra's knife struck home into his heart, and Satan grappled with his throat as he fell heavily upon my chest.

Such was the relation which I gathered from Myra, who, far from regretting what she had done, rejoiced over it.

"It was for your sake, Geordie! dear, dear Geordie!" she cried; "and rather than you should have been injured by a hair, I would have slain ten thousand of such carrion as that!" and she spurned it with her foot.

It was time, however, to consider what was to be done next.

"If I were as strong as my kinsman, Ishmael Toon," she said, "I would drag the accursed body into the tent of these murderers, and dare them to avenge it. As it is, I will go and wake him up for counsel."

She went, and I was left alone with the dead. As I did not like my company, however, I called Satan and walked to the brookside, where I sat down and smoked my pipe, and fondled the puppy-dog until he was wellnigh beside himself for joy. I soon found myself, however, in spite of these heroics, deep in serious reflections. Here was I, holding a responsible public office, for the honor of which, as well as for my own sake, it was in the last degree important that I should not be mixed up with broils and disturbances, suddenly involved in the worst kind of brawl known to the law, namely, a deliberate murder. For, although I was aware that, according to the wild notions entertained of justice by my Rommany friends, Myra's act would not be so construed or denominated, but extolled rather as a brave action, which I always thought and still think it truly was; yet I knew the law would make no such distinctions, but would exact, if the case was brought before its tribunals, the pound of flesh to the last moiety. This would involve all kinds of publicity, and it might be, notwithstanding the high influence which it was in my power then to command, the dreadful spectacle of a public execution. This last thought perfectly paralyzed me. The scene in all its dire realities and accompaniments was before me, and my heart sickened, and my brain whirled as in the eddies of madness. I thought no more of myself, my office, or the world's opinion, but only of my brave, noble-hearted, beloved Myra. That fate should never be hers. I would fly with her to the uttermost ends of the earth, sooner. Nay, I would die with her, rather than so great a calamity should befall her.

Whilst I was indulging in these reflections, she returned, bringing big Toon and Nosey with her. We all entered the tent together. Myra had already briefly related the facts of the case, and I felt it my duty to explain to them, as delicately as possible, in what light the law would regard the death of the assassin, urging the necessity of keeping the matter perfectly secret, if such were possible.

"That 's all right, Master Geordie," said big Toon, "according to your way of thinkin'; but we tawnies make our own laws, and never trouble the beaks. Don't you take on about that, nor be afeared that more folks 'll know about this than we thinks needful."

"What if all the world knew, Ishmael!" exclaimed Myra, in a burst of noble enthusiasm; "was it not a deed of justice such as the Great Name himself would approve? And who cares for the world or its laws? Let it come to that, Geordie dear, and you will find that Myra as little heeds their scaffolds as she regards their opinion."

"That 's my little gal!" chimed in Nosey. "Game to the backbone; and all up right and down straight. Hits clean out from the shoulder, — right left, left right, and a back-handed one, two, three over the claret-pot for luck. No skulking in little Myra. Quite as willing to take as give. By the Lord, big un, what a fancy lightweight she 'd be!" And Nosey rubbed his hands, and chuckled over his sister's good qualities, as if there was no more important business on hand just then.

I endeavored to bring the conversation to the point by inquiring what was to be done with the dead body.

"Pitch it into the sea," said Nosey; "it 'll be ebb tide in an hour, and the sea tells no tales when it 's homeward bound."

"Take the offal to the tents of his pals," said Myra, "and let them deal with it as they like. They can tell their master then how Ishmael's people punish his murder dogs."

"Good!" said Toon, rising; lay hold of his arms, Nosey, whilst I lift his bog-trotters. So, ho! my chicken. You 've got your dumplin's as was so knowin', and down on Master Geordie, there. Heave away, Nosey," and they carried out the dead towards the Danes' Dike, followed by myself and Myra.

When we came within hailing distance of the tent, big Toon began talking to himself: "Lights ahead, eh! Sittin' up, I s'pose, for this 'ere dead un. Well, well, my downy coveys, the dead will soon be among ye; and not a speakin' will ye get out of him, if ye sit there askin' on him questions till the Devil tecks a likin' for holy water. I say, Nosey, what a sprinklin' o' start they 'll get when they sees their dummy pal! Jesus-Jemminy! to see their hairs stand upright, and their eyes boggle fen-fires, and to hear how their forky tongues will wag and lie! That 'll beat all the booth plays and mountebank drolls in Bridlington fair. Steady, Nosey! A little here to the right; now pull up, whilst I hail the kiddie-hellies. Halloo, there! tawny bullies! Who 's astir? We 've brought a purty visitor to see you. Come out and carry him in. He 's too lame to walk, or he 'd pay his respections without troublin' you."

Thus hailed, there was a stir in the tent, and soon a rough voice, which the reader has heard once before, walked out of its rusty gates, and asked what was wanted.

"Nothin' purtacular," replied Nosey; "ony we 've changed our minds, and brought our little sis for you to take away back wi' you. You see you 've scared us out of our wits, and we 're afeard of our lives. Your pal, Juga, has killed our little, tiny, bolshin, Master Geordie,

already to-night, and it 'll be our turn next belike. So, to make friends, we 've brought the purty gal for the king, and we hopes your reverences will strike tent and go your ways at sunrise."

"Stop your tongue, brother!" interrupted Myra, coming forward and confronting the gruff giant as he stood in the door of his tent. "Stop your tongue, brother! and don't foul it with mocking such dogs as these. See, murderer!" she said, striking the fellow on the shoulder with one hand, and pointing to the dead body with the other, "there is your pal, slain by this hand, whilst at your bidding he was in the act of slaying Master Geordie, there in his sleep. Take him into your tent quickly, and dispose of him as you please. Our business is ended with you. And next time you send murderers on your errands you 'll have to find a better devil to speed them than the last you put into commission. Come, brothers," she added, "let us away from these, the accursed, henceforth of our race; whom I curse here, in the Great Name, and by the power of the mighty stars!"

We departed thus, leaving the gruff 'un standing like a petrifaction at his door, his eyes fixed on the ghastly face of the dead.

CHAPTER V.

FLAMBORO' HEAD.—PSYCHE IN ROBIN LITHE'S CAVE.—A SCHEME FOR THE FISHERMEN.

AT sunrise there was no trace of the strange gypsies' camp in the dike. Big Toon had despatched Ikey to watch their proceedings, and on his return he made this report. They had vanished like an ugly dream, and, for aught I could now show to the contrary, they were merely phantasmal, so strange, shadowy, and unreal does the whole transaction appear to me; for from that hour when we left the gruff giant staring in his dead pal's face, the blanket of the dark dropped down over the scenery and the actors forever. Nor was any allusion made to the subject by any one of those who had taken part in the grim play; so that I never knew how the dead man was disposed of. Ikey, indeed, was the only *nexus* linking the awful occurrences of that wild night with reality. He had seen the gypsies depart; so they must have been there, and it is possible, therefore, that the events described in the last chapter did really occur.

Meditating on these things, I set off early for Burlington, walking over the fields and along the path which runs by the edge of the cliffs. A stiff breeze was blowing over the bay, and a windbound fleet of more than five hundred sail were riding there at anchor. I was much struck by the encroachments which the sea is gradually making upon these eastern shores of the island. Year after year, the furious element advances with savager and still more savage menace, tearing down the gigantic rocks in the thunder of its roar and fury, and sweeping away meadows, churches, villages, as the trophies of its desolating conquests. The beach below me was crowded with its spoils, and they were often of such magnitude and grandeur as to inspire both awe and compassion. Vast, unwieldy bulks, detached from the cliffs, lay there conscious, as it seemed to me, and full of sorrow, but also of sublime endurance, awaiting their inevitable fate. The people of Burlington Quay have built a fine jetty to keep the sea from devouring their houses, as

those of Hornsea were devoured; but I doubt if the experiment will prove successful. The fine saloon at the entrance to the jetty has already had its warnings, and the streets immediately facing the sea are cracked and split with unmistakable meaning.

Nevertheless, Burlington Quay is a very pretty, quiet, little watering-place, frequented mostly by East Riding people, and more especially by the inhabitants of Hull. I had established my head-quarters here, for a season, in a cottage called "Sea-Drift Cottage," about a half-mile from the town, on the Flamboro' road; and thitherwards I now directed my steps. For although, as the reader has seen, I had my tent among the gypsies, and chiefly lived there at this season, yet my duties, as well as my inclination, sometimes led me to the haunts of civilization. On the occasion in question, however, my visit was intended to be but temporary; for I was bound on a new enterprise, and in altogether a new character, so far as the reader's present knowledge of me extends. And it will perhaps appear a little incomprehensible to him how a man who voluntarily descended to live with vulgar gypsies for the sole purpose of enjoyment, and without an ulterior thought of teaching them either the "Thirty-nine Articles," or the "Assembly's Catechism," or any idea of converting them from their heathenish ways, should suddenly, or even at any time, assume the mask of philanthropy, and commence a crusade against the ignorance of his own countrymen. And incredible as it may appear, such a fit of philanthropy did really come over me, and I had brooded over it so long that I resolved at length to accomplish it, and here I was at Burlington for that very purpose.

I had heard much of the ignorance, amounting almost to brutality, of the Flamboro' fishermen, and my long residence in their neighborhood — although I had little or no intercourse with them — confirmed the general report. What I had seen of them, however, interested me much in their favor. I liked them because they were a hardy, industrious, and courageous class of men; the finest boatmen on the coast, and excellent fishers. The money they made by fishing, however, was mostly squandered with an insane profusion at the public-houses; and the landlord of one of these houses told me that he had known men make fifty pounds in two excursions, and then madly spend it in a week, — most of it, perhaps, in the good landlord's own bar-room. I found, also, that the genuine fishers could neither read nor write, and their ignorance was such, indeed, as to place them at the mercy of every knave with whom they had money transactions;

especially those wholesale dealers in roguery and fish, who came from Hull, Leeds, and elsewhere, to buy their cargoes on the beach.

Now it was one of the duties of my public office to look after such stray sheep from the folds of civilization as these; and in this case my inclination backed my duty. I resolved, therefore, although it was my long vacation, and I was at liberty to act as I thought well, to combine usefulness with pleasure, and see, at least, what service I could render to these poor fishermen.

"But why not try your hand with the gypsies first?" So romantic an idea never entered my head; or rather, I should say, so Quixotic an idea. I went to live amongst them, because I thought and found they could teach me. They were rich in all kinds of learning. They were poor, independent, and satisfied. Great riches lie in that. They knew how to live rent free and tax free, although they had the finest dwelling sites in England, and could look over miles of woodland, or fine pastoral landscapes, or grand sea views at their pleasure. They were as well acquainted with old dame Nature, her curious ways and works, as if she had been dame Mabel, their grandmother. Without reckoning their knowledge of poaching, which implies also some knowledge of natural history, and their proud scholarship in the mysteries and humanities connected with fortune-telling by the stars. Add to which that they were a proud race, glorying in their long, unbroken descent from an antiquity which is lost in the twilight of time; an antiquity which was old before the pyramids were built, or the book of Job was written; proud also of their traditions and history, and separated, in short, from all Western ideas and teachings by a gulf as wide and deep as that which divides the Pariah of India from the Brahmin.

Clearly, therefore, amongst this people I had no room for experiment. They were fortified on all sides as with walls of adamant. But the Flamboro' fishermen were of a different breed, — adamantine enough I found them in one sense, but pervious enough in others. At all events, these were my game, and not the gypsies.

As I entered the gate of my palatial abode at Burlington, my landlord came out of his workshop in his shirt-sleeves, to greet me. He was a character in his way; a droll, good-humored, intelligent man, who had been a Burlington innkeeper, and was now, through the unthrifty ways of one of his customers, which he took care to turn to his own account, proprietor of his present residence with the land attached. He had a taste for natural history, — not after the gypsy fashion, though, — and turned many an honest penny by stuffing

birds, specimens of which might be seen to any extent within. His wife was also very good-humored, for she was very fat, and her cheeks shook like jelly when she laughed, which she often did, as I thought both unreasonably long and loud. They fully expected that I had come back to remain a week at least; and were not a little surprised when I ordered my horse to be ready in half an hour. There was no help for it, however; and at the appointed time I was in the saddle, and rode off towards Flamboro', so thoroughly disguised in my gentleman's clothing that Myra herself would scarcely have known me. I rode rapidly, nevertheless, past the tents, for fear lest a stray eye should recognize me; and alighting at the door of the Jolly Pirate, I inquired of a wild lad with red hair if there was a stable on those premises.

"Noa, maester," he replied; "but there 's Polly Dradda's donkey-shed in 't yard."

So into the yard I went, and into the donkey-shed I deposited "Blucher," who snorted proudly, as if he did n't like his quarters, snuffing and sneezing with unmistakable disdain and detestation over the musty hay-rick. There I left him, at all events, to reconcile his high-breeding and fine manners with the vulgar, democratic donkey-hovel as he best might.

When I entered the house I found Polly still smoking her pipe in the chimney hole, and was half tempted to ask her if she had been sitting there over her "drinking" since I last had the honor of seeing her in company with big Toon; but this would n't do for me in my new character, so I sat down on the old settle, and inquired of her if there was a boatman near at hand, as I wanted to make a short cruise.

"Then, Bill Gibbons is your man, and there he sits," said Polly, pointing to a fine stout fellow in a blue striped frock-shirt, who was drinking his beer in the opposite corner.

"All right, sir," he replied, "if you want a boat, I 'm ready when you are."

"No sich hurry, Bill Gibbons, wi' your imperance," interrupted Polly. "Let the gentleman sit still a bit. He looks tired, poor thing! And mayhap he 'd like to squench his thrust as well as other folks."

"I 'm neither tired nor dry, mother," quoth I; "but if your friend Bill there would like another pint, bring it in as soon as you like, and I 'll pay for it."

"That 's spoke like a gentleman," said Polly, taking a long pull at

her pipe before she laid it down to fetch the beer. "If folks did n't drink — axin' your pardon, sir! — I might soon shut up the Jolly Pirate, and that 'd be a great loss to the public in these parts." So saying she hobbled off, although I could not see the force nor logic of her deduction.

"Queer old woman, that, sir," said Gibbons in a half whisper, as she vanished under the screen. "Nobody in these latitudes dast say bo to her goose. She 'd send the hammer and tongs at um in quick sticks, and would n't let um hev no more beer for the best coppers i' England."

"What 's that anent the beer, Bill Gibbons, I sud like to know?" said Polly, catching at the word, as she came out from behind the veil of Bacchus. "I 'd let you to know that I keeps but one tap, and that 's the best, mister saucy-box! And if you don't like it you can lump it, and leave it."

"Why, what 's all this about?" said Bill. "Who 's sayin' anythin' agin the beer? Do ye think I 'd drank so many pints on't if I did n't like it? You 're wool gatherin', Polly! Hand the mug here, and I 'll soon tell you whether it 's good stuff, or belly-vengeance."

This somewhat pacified Polly, although she continued grumbling to herself, whilst Bill was drinking; much to his amusement; for he gave me many a knowing nod and sly wink at the old dame's expense.

When the pot was emptied we strolled down to the North Sea, a snug little haven, so called, lying between vast walls of rock, which the sea had bored with caverns and decorated with marvellous and most suggestive ornaments. The steep and lofty beach was crowded with boats, from the small cobel to the deep-sea smack; and the fishermen were busily engaged amongst them in their various employments. I entered into conversation with three or four whom I found caulking and painting one of the larger craft; and to put them at their ease, and make them more communicative, I lit my pipe and talked to them as I sat down on the beach. I found that the common report respecting their ignorance was no fable; not one out of the present group could read or write; although they were smart, fine men, with a singular expression of good nature and intelligence in their features. Whatever related to sea craft they knew well enough; for they lived closed to Nature, on the grandest element of her power and sovereignty; and were familiar with her storm wrath, and all the beautiful, sublime, and terrible forms of her oceanic incar-

nations. But the spiritual empire which man has conquered, and which is his highest triumph, and of those intellectual kingdoms which he has established, in the vast and splendid region of the soul, these poor fishermen were as utterly ignorant as the most brutal animals. I did not, of course, and as the reader knows, expect to find them otherwise; but I was not the less shocked and pained at the disclosure. I am, indeed, always much affected when I meet men thus circumstanced and conditioned. What had they done to forfeit their claim to this high heritage and its immunities, that they should be thus doomed to live in grim Megatherium life, cohabiting only with the monstrous, aboriginal forms of nature, as if Plato had never taught the immortality of the soul, and Jesus Christ were a myth? They had done no evil thing that I could discover to justify the infliction of that primal curse upon them, unless, indeed, the Omnipotent had created them without souls on purpose, and by way of experiment; a solution of the difficulty which would put an end forever to all further questions and repinings, as so much open rebellion against the Divine wisdom and authority. For we do not ask why a dog is not a man, nor do we feel any evangelical longings to make the dog a Christian, knowing that, good, faithful and affectionate as he surely is, he has no Christian faculty nor relish for creeds, and that he is not, therefore, a proper subject for Christian sympathy. His spiritual darkness is a necessity of his canine constitution; and I should like to believe, as a satisfaction to the justice of the universe, that all poor men like these fishers were properly *canes*, and had no spiritual *fundus* whatsoever. Seeing, however, that, as a general rule, they have the same organs, offices, passions, and dimensions as the brightest specimens of their race, one cannot avoid doubts in the matter, and I prefer to give my poor fellow-images the benefit of them.

So, in effect, I told the Flamboro' men as I talked with them this fine morning. They were quite willing, if the means could only be found, to learn to read and write, and count; and would not be ashamed to meet together in classes for this purpose. They undertook also to speak to their mates about it; for they were as clanish as Scotch Highlanders, and if the right men, whom they trusted, only led the way, they would follow even as Martin Luther said, "Though all the tiles on the way to Worms were so many raging fiery devils," or something quite as brave as that. I left them therefore with this understanding, promising to return again, and help them to organize themselves into an institution for this primary learning, as soon as they were ready.

I was a great man with Bill Gibbons after that, and he took as much care of me in his boat as if I had been a real live lord, instead of a Rommany pal in the disguise of a philanthropic gentleman. I had never been in an open boat on the Flamboro' seas before, although I had often traversed them by steam, and knew the coast thoroughly. I had not visited the wild romantic caves, therefore, of the headland; and I now directed Gibbons to pull me towards them. He, however, being an artist, and having a veritable eye for the picturesque, ventured thus to speak: "Go out to sea a little way first, sir, won't you, sir?"

"What for?" I asked.

"So that we can take in a good sweep of the coast, and see what a picture it is, and how fine it looks in its sea riggin'."

"Very well, Bill; pull away! I see you know how to make the most of the old rocks."

"Ay, ay, sir. And very grand they be; 'specially when a gale o' wind 's blowin'. I've seen um when the waves has washed more nor half way over um, and the foam has riz up like great clouds, floating right over their tops, and lyin' as thick as snow on the high lands there aboon for a quarter of a mile. And a pretty sight it was; for the foam was colored in blue and red and orange, just for all the world like a rainbow."

"A storm must be a magnificent sight at the Head, Bill."

"Ay, sir. And many a one have I seen; and many a ship in distress have I and my mates gone off to in the dark winter nights, when you could not see the light-house signals nor two yards before you any way; and the wind 's been dead ahead, and the sea runnin' sky high. See, sir," he added, pointing out some rocks to the southward; "a fine ship struck on them rocks, and all hands lost, the 14th of February, this very year. It was a dreadful night, and the sea run so high we could n't get out to help um, poor chaps! We watched um from the cliffs until they was all swept away, and the ship went to pieces."

Bill wiled away the time with similar narratives of shipwrecks and disasters at sea, until he thought we were far enough out to do justice to the picturesque coast. He then lay on his oars, and pointed out the most notable features of the scenery. A little to the right were the white cliffs of Speighton, — populous as we have before described them with innumerable birds, — rising perpendicularly from the sea, and presenting a smooth and bare surface, without any oasis of vegetation to relieve their grim and stony barrenness. Straight before us

was the "North Sea," on either side of which the rocks assumed that wonderful architectural appearance which has made them so famous and interesting. Shattered temples, fortresses, and amphitheatres, miraculous caverns, arches, and fallen columns; rugged and mighty rocks standing alone in the waters, like monuments of obliterated and forgotten history, arrested the eye and startled the imagination, as if one were gazing upon the ruins of some vast Palmyra of the ocean. "Robin Lithe's Cave," the seaward entrance to which we could clearly discern, lay to the left of the North Sea, and as it was the largest of the group, and the water was high enough to float us through it, I directed Bill to pull northward first of all.

We entered it by a rugged and narrow opening, which gradually swelled into cathedral dimensions, and became impressive through its grandeur and magnitude. A twilight darkness prevailed in it, broken here and there both by the noonday glory which illuminated its eastern and western portals, and by the light which broke through the natural crevices and shot down through the shafts in the lofty roof. There was a hollow, reverberating roar in the cavern, as the waves rolled over the rocks beneath us and struck against the side walls, which sounded like the famous Greek line in the Iliad. We pulled farther on into the darkness, and Bill now lit a couple of candles which he had brought with him, thus suddenly converting the scene into a Salvator Rosa picture. Farther on we heard voices, and presently came up to a boat loaded with visitors, who were clamorous for one of our candles; for, like the foolish virgins, they had come to Robin Lithe's feast without oil in their lamps. Whilst Bill was hesitating what to do, awaiting his orders, a sweet voice, which sounded familiar to me, repeated the prayer of the petition, and I immediately acceded to it with strange emotions in my heart, by passing the light to a small, white hand and arm, stretched out through the background of darkness to receive it. The boats were close together, lying alongside, as the salts say, and as the hand was withdrawn, the light fell full upon the woman's face. I was not at all surprised at the disclosure it made, for I expected it from the music of the voice, — although, of course, I could not be sure who it was, notwithstanding my inward admonitions, and the tumults which that voice awoke within me. It was she, however, my beautiful Psyche of the heath; and such was our second meeting, although she did not recognize me again. The boats separated, and we heard the merry laughter of our fellow-voyagers far down the cave, which now had no more attractions for me; it was dark, dismal, and lonely,

as the solitude and horror of Hades. I felt drawn, also, to the retreating boat, as by mighty, invisible cords, and the power I felt compelled me to order unconscious, astonished Bill Gibbons to follow it. We came up to it just as the Charon of its destiny was urging it through the entrance into the sea; rather a difficult thing to do at any time, and now dangerous, because the wind was blowing on to the shore, and the sea was somewhat rough. We waited until they had cleared the outlying rocks, and then followed in their wake. But hark! what shrieks are those rising above the wind and waves? "Quick! Gibbons, quick! Some accident has happened. Pull, man, for your life!" and, in a few moments, we also had cleared the rocks; and yonder, some fifty yards off, a female figure was struggling with the waves, almost within reach of the boat we were following; and twice they have tried to save her, and twice they have failed. What cowards! will no one venture in to save her? O, it is she! Pull, man, pull for the dear God's sake! And now for the rescue! Into the sea I plunged, dashing through it with a swiftness which fear, hope, and love can alone inspire. I grasp at her flowing hair; one mad, mad, but, alas! too eager grasp. She escapes me — sinks — O God! Sinks under my very hand! And down, down into the deep I follow her, — bear her to the surface, — and she is saved.

From first to last, the whole time of the catastrophe did not exceed six minutes. But how did it occur? And what insanity or cowardice prevented the boatman from venturing into the water to save that beautiful girl? First, as to the cause of the accident. She was leaning over the gunwale at the time, and the current, which was running very strong round the extreme rocks, caused the boat to jib so suddenly that she was precipitated from it into the sea. And, secondly, as to the reason of the boatman not venturing after her, he had a very sufficient one, — he could not swim! Positively this man whose life was always in jeopardy, always exposed to the wiles and treachery of the sea, had never learned that to him — and all men, indeed — most indispensable art, — the glorious art of swimming. And what is more, there is not a fisherman in all Flamboro' who is practically acquainted with it; and it is not long ago since one of their best pilots was drowned in smooth water, for lack of this very knowledge, within ten or twenty yards of the shore. The little butterfly-catcher, however, was saved, and I got many thanks from her friends, and from her own beautiful blue eyes, and an invitation, also, from the rector of Flamboro', who was present, and at whose house she was visiting, to call in there when I should pass that way.

The boats again separated, and I now took an oar myself, to keep my blood in circulation, and we pulled round the head to another small bay called the "South Sea," which lies at the foot of Danes' Dike. Here I landed and dismissed my man, taking the cliff route towards the light-house. I was full of the late adventure, as was natural enough, and was not a little elated at my own share in it. The singularity of the whole occurrence, however, did not strike me so forcibly at first as it did subsequently, when I had time to think calmly and deliberately over it. Then it was that I detected its subtle design, as one more means to an ultimate, planned, and fatal end, and saw that I had but fallen into a trap, and that my elation of spirits was particularly ill-timed and out of place. This came of reflection; and that dark habit which I had so fatally acquired of looking into the dread arcana where the Nemesis of life and death presides, with all her secrets. I read my adventure in its fullest meaning, and knew well enough what the issue would be. I must bide the time of fruition, however; much as I now longed to accelerate events, and force them to maturity. How could I avoid this longing, — however insane I might know it to be, — with the certainty before me of possessing so beautiful a prize as the fates had in store for me? It was impossible; and the thought that I was one step nearer to this dear object made me revert once again to the accessories which had advanced me, and in the fulness of my heart I blessed them one and all; but especially thee, O glorious art of swimming! who, by the magic of thine influence hast so often aforetime enabled me to battle with the storm and the tempest, defying their utmost rage, and rejoicing with the perfect confidence of a full security in the midst of their [illegible] and most tumultuous terrors. Thou! the protector and delight of my boyhood, whether in the calm waters of my native Nene, or the classic bosom of Cam, the beloved river of my student days, or in the majestic arms of the mighty Hudson, rolling proudly with his tides and currents amidst subject isles and guardian mountains! Thou who hast ever been my friend and benefactor, alike in the peril of death and the blessed rapture of exultant and secure life, to thee I pay my profoundest homage and allegiance, and most because through thee and thy glorious aid I was enabled to rescue from thine enemy and man's, the most beautiful of earth's darling daughters.

On arriving at the Jolly Pirate, I remounted my horse and rode back to Burlington, returning on foot to the tents, which I reached at midnight, in time to see big Toon and his pals go off on a poaching expedition.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GYPSY ORACLE.

SEVERAL days elapsed after the events detailed in the preceding chapter, without anything occurring worthy of special notice. I had employed myself in posting up my journal and preparing one or two public documents in connection with my office. I read Wordsworth also at this time, both for culture and intellectual use; for I had to speak publicly about him during the coming winter. Myra frequently came in to see me at such times, and I tried to make her like the poet; but she instinctively shrank from him as anti-magnetic, and out of the pale of her sympathies. Even his ballads and simple lyrics had very little charm for her. He was too cold and plastic, too artistic, and his verses were not alive enough for her. She wanted more blood and sap, more fiery rush of feeling and passion. She laughed outright at his few love pieces, the Lucy poems for example, and the beautiful and noble lines to his wife. That poem also, in which, as the climax of love's devotion, the surviving lover utters that memorable line, —

"And O the[illegible]rence to me!"

was the very affectation of passion. She would have uttered threnes and infinite wailing over such a loss, and her wild, burning love would have gone far to reanimate her lost one and restore him to her. She had a fine natural appreciation of what was objectively natural and beautiful, and her whole nature vibrated to such influence. But Wordsworth's subjectivity alternately pained and shocked her, as something unreal, and yet supernaturally like reality. She was a perfect child of nature; and her character was a study, in which the wisest might have benefited. Once or twice the romantic thought of educating this beautiful and profusedly-gifted girl occupied and disturbed me. I soon saw, however, all the difficulties in the way, to say nothing of the prejudice of her own tribe, and the vulgar mouthings of my venerable and most respected friend Mistress

Grundy. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to accept my darling as she was, a fine-hearted, quick-witted, passionate, and impulsive beauty.

In my trunk, which was usually left open when I was in the way, there was a copy of Murray's edition of Byron, which I occasionally opened and read, although I knew nearly the whole of Byron by heart, long before I was eighteen years old. This book was Myra's idol; and she would sit and read in it for hours on the grass before my tent, whilst I was occupied within. Here she saw her own heart as in a mirror; and all her affections and sympathies were interpreted and uttered in orchestras of music, to which her whole being responded. How I could read that stupid, unimpassionated Wordsworth, whom she had the profanity to call a "self-conceited old woman," whilst the harp of Apollo was in my reach, she could not divine. The step between "closing your Byron, and opening your Goethe," was an impassable, inconceivable gulf to her; and all its meanings were hidden forever from her eyes.

Some of my friends to whom I have related these memoranda of Myra, as elucidating her remarkable character, have expressed surprise that a young girl, circumstanced as she was, should have displayed so much high and cultivated feeling in such various scenes, and such a ready appreciation of what was noble and beautiful in conduct. But Nature continually manifests her rights and powers, and the supreme sovereignty of her will and pleasure, by a favoritism altogether independent of birth, rank, or fortune; and Myra was an instance of this capricious and despotic absolutism. Cultivated, however, she was not, in the legitimate meaning of the word; she was simply natural, her endowments being of a queenly and heroic character, and her language, often truly eloquent, was the spontaneous utterance of her feelings. Her admiration for Byron was genuine, and from her heart, for she was essentially a Byronic woman, and lived in the passional sphere. To love and be beloved, whether wisely or not, was her ideal of life. Love, however, did not mean sensuality with her, although it included the sphere which sensuality covers; it was a devotion of body and soul to the loved one; a feeling so absorbing and ennobling that it left no room for selfishness, and found its true outlet in deeds of self-sacrifice and heroism. Love unto death, through death and over death triumphant. Such was Myra's nature, if I interpret it aright, as I think I do.

And could you live with such a woman and not love her? asks some heart which beats responsive to hers. No, I could not. I

loved her very much; more than I suspected. And yet I did not love her. I clung to her indeed, as I now think, with more than a lover's tenacity; and yet it was not the divine, immortal love wherewith I loved her. I know what that love is now; for I have found her whom my soul loveth; but then I did not know it, nor was I sure that I loved her at all, except as a good brother should love a beautiful sister of whom he is proud. Even when nearest to her, I felt myself farthest away from her. She was a paradox to my heart; and my heart was a paradox in respect to her. Neither did I show my regard for her at any time, in any other way than that I have already related. A barrier of restraint, made mightier and more impassable by those prophetic whispers of the oracles of fate which predestined me for another's, intervened also between us, and flung an aspect as of incest upon the thought of any closer union between us than that which already existed. She knew also what the horoscope of her dreams had foretold respecting my destiny; and more than once she had alluded to it with sorrow, which she knew was unavailing. She was, however, a very woman, in spite of her resignation, and on one of those occasions, in speaking of the time when she should lose her Geordie forever, as she expressed herself, she burst out into such vehement and uncontrollable tears and agonies of utterance that I was for the first time made sensible of a secret, involving such responsibilities, and so dire a tragedy, that I stood appalled at the revelation like one before whose eyes the veil of some dreadful Isis had been suddenly withdrawn. I felt guilty; and yet I was unconscious of a guilty act. But had I done wisely in my intercourse with her? Alas! tried by that standard, I was far from blameless. My affections also were deeply interested in her. She had become necessary to my existence, mysteriously represented me indeed, and had grown as it were to be a part of me. And now that I discovered how much she was mine, I felt that I could not part from her; that I ought not to part from her. I forgot all about Psyche, and destiny, and everything else, and in the passionate fervor of sudden, irresistible, and overwhelming feeling, I clasped her to my heart. She knew the meaning of that wild embrace, and felt it through all her being. It was the first time my arms had encircled her with the fire of love burning in them; and for a few moments she yielded herself wholly and absolutely to the new raptures. Then turning her beautiful eyes to mine with an expression of sublime sorrow and self-sacrifice, she said: "No, Geordie! It cannot be. I know it cannot be. Dear as your love is to me, and O it is unut-

terably dear! and sincerely as you now think you love me, and as you now do love me, we must go our own separate ways in this world. We were not made for each other, or only made for a time, a very brief time. I am but a poor gypsy girl, and there is one who is waiting for you more favored than I, happier than I ever shall be, but not truer, Geordie, O, not truer!"

I wept and was speechless. What words could I have offered to this dear maiden expressive of what I felt in this hour of my Gethsemane? For it was to me a time of agony such as I never before experienced; Gethsemane and Calvary in one, — love transfixed by sorrow, and crowned with the thorns of martyrdom, and reviled by the scoffings of the rabble crew of fate.

. . . . .

In the evening of the following day, whilst I was playing at quoits with big Toon, in the presence of Flaming Nosey and sundry pals, Ikey came running towards us with the news that two ladies had that moment arrived at the tents to have their fortunes told. "And they want you, Mister Geordie, I 'spect, cause there 's nobody else here what catches butterflies and makes a present on um to young ladies; and sich a chap they wants and is a waitin' for."

This speech, addressed to me, took me, notwithstanding my expectations, by a surprise so complete that I lost my usual readiness of reply, and stood dangling my quoit as my great prototype, Ellen's bridegroom, dangled his hat and plume aforetime in the presence of Young Lochinvar.

"What 's the chap scaverin' about?" said big Toon, in his best banter. "Seed anybody the like of him? He looks as glum as if he was goin' to be scragged. Why don't you be off to the purty bushne lady, Master Geordie?"

"Let the child be, brother Toon," chimed in Nosey. "Mayhap he knows his facin's; an' if he be like me, he 'd as soon face the Devil as a woman with a purty face."

Thus rallied, I recovered my senses, and set off with as loud a laugh as I could call from the stable, and was soon in the presence of Psyche and her companion, who were waiting on the green opposite the tents, surrounded already by a troop of our importunate child imps.

I made my bow as I best could, and the blue-eyed maiden, who recognized me at once, with a sweet, sweet smile, opened the case by some friendly words, and inquired for the Pythoness of the gypsy oracle.

"You see," she said, "I am as good as my word. I promised to come and have my fortune told, and here I am."

"I know'd you 'd come, my purty lady," quoth I, "for the stars told me so; and the stars is always true."

"O yes! the stars are true enough; and they seem to be very communicative to you. Are you also a fortune-teller?"

"No, lady, I tells no fortins, though I reads the stars. I keeps what secrets they tells me all to myself, and thinks over um at nights when the bully boys are asleep, and I am alone in my tent."

"And what do the stars tell you about me?"

"Strange things, lady; but I must n't peach. Myra or Granny Mabel 'll tell you more nor I dare. But I knows you are a good bushne, and the stars love you."

I took off my hat as I said this, and passed my hand through my hair in an act of self-forgetfulness. The lady started, and uttered a cry of surprise, as if she recognized in me her deliverer at Flamboro' Head. She instantly recovered herself, however, and addressed a few words in French to her companion, and I had now to bear the scrutiny of them both. Myra, however, came up at this moment, just in time to rescue me from my position.

"This is my sister Myra," I said, introducing her; "and she is the secret-teller, and knows all the things of life and death, and what lies beyond the stars."

Psyche looked at me again, and this time so earnestly my eyes fell beneath hers. I saw that the invisible spell was working its first problems in her; that she felt the mystery which enveloped us both, although she could not solve it. I watched Myra also with intense attention. She was visibly affected by the presence of her rival; and when she took her hand to commence her operations, she trembled violently and grew deadly pale. This sudden agitation, of which I only knew the cause, gave a coloring of awe and reality to her functions, which could not fail to be impressive. She examined her visitor's small and delicate white hand; and then slowly raising her eyes to her face she exclaimed: "You are born to be happy, lady; and the Great Name has made you good and beautiful. O, so beautiful! that I, accustomed to all the forms of beauty in the immortal spheres, could gaze on you in untiring worship forever. And yet there is enmity between our houses; and we two could never love each other, for we occupy different positions in the places of the stars; and you are what it is not given me to be. You are loved, and destined to love one of whom you now know nothing;

or nearly nothing. He hides in the holes of the earth, obedient to his destiny, wherein it is written that he shall assume new and ever newer forms to you, for service and occasion of love; that you shall see him, and know him not; hear him, and hear him not; until the time comes when your probation shall be complete, and your destiny ripe for fulfilment. Happy woman!" she added, bowing her head to the ground; "most unhappy Myra! Go!" she said, "and in peace. The stars have spoken."

"O no!" cried Psyche, passionately, her eyes full of tears, "I cannot go, and leave you so unhappy. Why are you unhappy? You tell me strange things, and in a manner I least expected to hear when I came; but I am interested in them and in you, and you must let me try and make you happy. How can I do so, my poor, dear sister?"

"Thank you, thank you!" said Myra, seizing her outstretched hand, and in a voice choking with emotion; "but you cannot help me. You, least of all in this world; and yet from you I would rather receive benefits than from any other person. But you know not what you ask. Behind me and you and him there is a woof of secrets and mysteries which may not now be revealed; although you will know all hereafter. Go, dear lady! and I thank the Great Name that in my poverty and desolation I am yet rich enough to bless you at your departure."

I could bear no more. My heart was bursting with feelings I could neither define nor utter; and I stole from the spot as the ladies were retiring, and Myra staggered to Mabel's tent.

CHAPTER VII.

BURLINGTON FAIR MORNING: THE OLD HALL.

THE next day was Burlington fair, and big Toon roused me betimes in the morning, inviting me to join the chals and see the sport. I was not sorry to have the chance, although, as the reader may suppose, I was not in the best mood for it. But neither was I in the mood to stay behind, for the scene of last night had unnerved me altogether, and I was still nervous and agitated, and dreaded my next interview with Myra, although I knew that for her part she would repress all show of feeling as much as possible. I was by no means sure of myself, however; so I thought I had better go.

I presently came out from the door of my tent, therefore, and crossed to the camp-fire, where most of the tribe were assembled. Granny Mabel was busy at her old post, and savory smells issued from the great iron pot which she was superintending, very stimulating to the appetite, although this provocation was quite unnecessary to our case, inhaling, as we did, the hungry sea air, both day and night. We were all glad of our breakfast, and ate heartily, as soon as it was ready. I thought old Granny looked troubled and haggard, as she sat there at the head of the circle, and she was unusually quiet all the while. There was noise enough, however, among the tawny chaps and lasses, and much laughter and merriment. It was a fine morning, too, and everybody was in good humor and full of boisterous spirits. Hiram was cracking his jokes and uttering his quaint speeches in tags of rhyme as usual; and Flaming Nosey was speculating with Toon upon the chances of the fair. The lasses were all dressed out in their best finery; some in yellow gowns, with large red shawls flung over their heads and shoulders; others in dresses of blue and green, and all of them mighty proud of their caparisons. I noticed, what had frequently struck me before as remarkable in ladies' dresses, that the *pine pattern*, as it is called, prevailed as ornament in these holiday garments of my wild sisters. And knowing the esoteric meaning of the symbol, and its Eastern origin, that it was a Phallic hieroglyph, in short, representing the matrix of all life, and

worshipped as such in those ancient times, — precisely as the Maypole and garland erected upon every English green were the symbols of fecundity in the religious mysteries of Priapus, — knowing, I say, the inner meaning of this representation, I fell into musings upon that old, past time, thus strangely, and by an almost forgotten *nexus*, linked to the present. Here were the lineal descendants of those pagan times and peoples bearing their most sacred sign, and yet ignorant of its import. It can be traced back in the East beyond a period of three thousand years; and in Western Europe it has rarely been out of fashion as an ornament, but if superseded for a time it was sure to recur again, as if there was an arcane necessity for its propagation and continuance. Nature loves it, and instructs the human eye to love it also. It is her revenge upon us for our mock modesty; and she points to this emblem in scornful triumph.

When I was in the midst of these cogitations, the tawnies broke up from the breakfast ring, and began to prepare for the business of the day. When all was ready we set off down the road, — some ten or a dozen of us, — old Hiram taking the lead, and fiddling away in his best style, whilst Ina, a young girl of sixteen, and cousin to Myra, struck, thumbed, and jingled the tamborine in concert, much to the admiration of Ikey, who could not help dancing for joy, and compelling his sisters to dance with him, making us all merry with his antics. Ina played her wild instrument well, and was proud of her skill. She kept time admirably, and when excited she was like one beside herself, so wholly and passionately did she throw her soul into the performance. She was the best dancer in the camp too, and even excelled Ikey, who had otherwise no equal amongst his tribe. She was a pretty girl, proud and wilful, and vain of her personal appearance. She had laughing hazel eyes, and a perfectly Grecian face. Her forehead was low, and her beautiful brown hair was braided over her temples and bound up in a fillet behind, and decorated with a cluster of large pearls, — imitations of course, and set in fine Brummagem gold. Her nose was aquiline, and her mouth red and tempting as a rose in June. Her cheeks were richly colored, and suffused a warmth over her olive complexion, as if she had just burst, all aglow, from the gates of the morning.

By the time we had walked a couple of miles the company grew more settled and sober, and each betook himself to his own thoughts, or to conversation. Ikey had found his way to the side of his cousin Ina, and being next them I overheard what they talked about. Indeed they did not pretend to be secret, and were aware of my

presence; for I had just exchanged words with Hiram in their hearing, and had scarcely done laughing at his oddities, when they began: —

"I say, cousin," quoth Ikey, "how purty you looks this mornin'. I never seed sich a fine gal. You grows purtier and purtier every day."

"Don't gammon, Ikey; there 's no good in gammon; and I don't like to have it paid out to me. I'm no purtier than other tawny gals, that I knows of; and if I be's, what 's it matter to you?"

"It does matter to me, my daintie dearie, — 'cause I likes to see it, and it do my heart good, and it ain't gammon; and you is purtier than all the gals I ever seed."

"Well, Ikey, suppose I be, — what then?"

"What then!"

"Yes, what then?"

"Well, that 's a poser. What then, indeed? As if you did n't know."

"Know? Know what?"

"Why, what then."

"Don't be a fool, Ikey, and talk balderdash. How should I know 'what then,' or what now, or what you would be at?"

"Can you read a puzzle, Ina?"

"That all 'pends on the case."

"Well, you see when I was down Nottingham I seed a rifle in a winder; the purtiest rifle I had ever seed; and I stood a lookin' on it, and a fondlin' on it outside till I got a kinder mad about it, I liked it so. And as I had no dubs to buy it I went away down street as heavy as a load of lead, thinkin' all the while of the purty rifle in the winder, and a wishin' it wur mine. Wishin', howsumdever, wur no use; and so I went back to the tents in Sherwood Forest, and did nothin' but fret and dream about the purty rifle. At last there wur a shootin' match got up at Mansfield; and I walked all the way there, along with brother Toon, and won the match; killin' eleven pigeons out of twelve from the trap; the last badly hit, but flyin' out o' bounds. *What then*, dearie cousin Ina? What then cumed next arter Ikey had got the dubs, — Ikey that loved the purty rifle in the Nottingham chap's winder? Why, away he went straight to the place, and paid down the shiners for the dearie, and brought it away with him to the tents, and fondled it, and let it sleep with him at nights, the purty thing, never to part with it no more."

"Well, what 's that mean? What 's the rifle to do with me? I'm no rifle to be shot out of, and you 're a fool, Ikey."

"Fool! S'pose I be. You're no fool, Ina, and can read the puzzle."

"Not I, indeed."

"Yes, you can, my purty dearie! The rifle's very dear to Ikey."

"Well, keep it; you bought it and paid for it."

"There again! She won't take to the puzzle. Heerd anybody the like?" And Ikey began to grow moody.

"You need n't get glumpy, Ikey. It don't become a Rommany chal when he's a keepin' of company with his cousin."

"I wish I was a keepin' of company with you, Ina, dearie. You know I wishes I was; but you are too purty to take on wi' the likes of a plain chap as me."

"If you're not a keepin' of company with me, fool, who are you a keepin' with? Perhaps with Master Geordie there behind," she added, looking archly to me over her shoulder.

"What's it all about, sister Ina?" I asked, joining them at the same time, as if I had heard nothing of the conversation.

"It's only a puzzle this addlepate has been setting me about a rifle, and a silly gawkie who fell into fits of love with it," said Ina.

"And did you read the puzzle, sister Ina? Tell me all about it."

"Ask his glumps there to tell you. I don't know its meanin'."

"Don't believe her, Master Geordie," quoth Ikey, "don't believe her. She's none so blind, but she's gone wilful and likes to make me ha' the blues and the trembles. But I don't care a shot, and I won't let her bother me. Ikey'll stick to his rifle, and fondle his purty rifle. O, the purty rifle, that never gives itself any airs, and is alus true to its chargins!"

Ina now laughed outright, and began to taunt and flout the poor gypsy lad in a merciless way. He was getting angry, and I don't know what might have come next if old Hiram had not suddenly called to us to stop. We were by this time close to the great hall where Graham of that ilk resided, — a good-enough gentleman, whose hares my respectable pals had thinned considerably since they had sojourned in his neighborhood; and now these dare-devil boys proposed to pay a visit to his kitchen, and ask for a drink of beer and a hunch of bread and cheese. It was fair-time they said, and everybody's hearts ought to be as open as their mouths were ready to be. I thought so too, and had a mind to accompany them; so

off we went down the drive-walk and straight to the servants' hall. Hiram made known our presence by a lively tune on his fiddle, keeping time with that everlasting stump of his. Presently a servant girl, with a white cap on her head and a duster in her hand, looked out upon us from an open window in the second story, and laughed heartily at old Hiram's antics. She was soon joined by another damsel, who, in her hurry to look below, nearly upset her companion. Then they both laughed, and began to dance up there in good earnest, whereupon Hiram put more steam into his elbow, and joined them in a perfect fury of motion. Finally, a powdered flunkey appeared at the door and said something, which we did not hear for the noise. Then the girls above vanished, and Hiram ceased playing, tucking at the same time his fiddle under his arm, and making a polite bow to the flunkey, who tossed his imperial head scornfully, and bade us take ourselves off, if we did n't want to be sent to the house of "corweckshion." Well, we did n't want to be sent to the house of "corweckshion," and we did n't mean either to be off quite so soon as flunky beefeater would have us, and I could see that Hiram was tickled at his appearance and lordly airs, and that some fun was in the wind, — so accordingly it turned out.

"What for, *sor!*" quoth he, leering at the lackey. "Why should we be off, *corf!* And at your bidden? Son of a midden! Where do you expect to die, when you go to — my eye — with your crinkum crankums and your winkum wankums and yellow breeches — so tight, quite — that if you scratches you can never hitches in these same yellow breeches. Be off, eh? Fust the piper pay! A horn of good beer, the tawny chaps to cheer, — and a bite of bread and cheese, if you please; my six-foot powdered flunkey — my charming little dear."

During this ridiculous speech, flunkey looked pins and needles and tiger's claws at Hiram, who was not in the least disturbed, but maintained his gravity as if he had spoken only the most respectful compliments. Not so, however, three or four servants, who, attracted by the noise, had by this time assembled in the hall just behind "six-foot"; for they fairly roared with laughter at the oddness of Hiram's speech, and evidently enjoyed the flunkey's discomfiture.

"You may laugh, gentlemen, if you please," said he, turning his angry face towards his fellow-servants, "but I tell you it 's no larfin' matter to have sich low fellers as them are a coming to take possession of Graham Hall, — will he, nil he. They wants bread and cheese and beer, does they? And they won't go away without they gets

it, won't they? I tell you what it is," he added, condescending at length to speak to us; "you're a set of raggermuffins, and thieves, and picketpockets, — and porchers, and rob the squire of his game, and steal sheep and bulwocks, — and if you don't be off I'll have you all taken up and put into the stocks, and sent to the house of corweckshion. So cut your stick, raskwells, without any more o' your insolwence."

"What do you say, old dusty pate?" cried Nosey, as he sprang forward and seized the fellow by the collar. "Pickpockets, thieves, and all the rest of the gang? Now by God's mercy, you white-livered toady, if you don't down on your marrow-bones and beg me and my pals pardon, I'll pound your flour-head into better dough than Graham Hall iver seed baked." And Nosey shook the tall hoppole like a bag of bones.

"O, pray don't," he blubbered. "Don't, pray don't, you dear, good gypsy raggermuffin. It was ony my fun an' airs, and I did n't mean no harm, and no offence I assure you. Do let me go," he continued, clasping both his hands, and turning up the whites of his cat-looking eyes; "I'll do anythin' you want me; indeed I will."

"Then down on your pins," roared Nosey; whilst the servants looked on, half frightened and half enjoying the fun.

"Well, then, I'm down," replied flunkey; "and now let me get up! O, let me get up! My breeches' knees will be so dirtwy; and master wants me, I know he do."

"Master can wait; and d—n your breeches. So now then begin to ax pardon."

"Well, I'm very sorry for what I've done," said the poor devil, in an agony of fear.

"Sorry I am that when sich gentlemen as Ishmael Toon and Flaming Nosey, the prize-fighter, and Hiram, the crack-fiddler, and Master Geordie, second cousin to the Emproor of Russia, and more larned than all the parsons in Yorkshire, comed to Graham Hall at fair-time to play a tune and ask for some beer and cheese and bread in exchange therefor, — should have been received by such a sneakin' lickspittle as I am, and not by the good butler who keeps the keys of the beer-barrel, and knows where the cheese and bread is shelfed. Do you hear," said Nosey, "you snivellin' danderlegs? Say all that arter me, quick as right left, left right, — and a nuckler on the nose."

"Yes, yes; I'll say it all; every bit of it; 'and a nuckler on the nose.' O, dear me! O, dear me! Let me get up. I never will do so no more."

"What 's all this about, eh? What 's this? Jones, is that you? And you, fellow, who are you?"

Before Nosey had time to reply Jones sprang to his feet, and retreated behind the good squire, who had thus suddenly broke in upon the scene, causing Nosey to release his hold of the long flunkey.

"They are thieves, squire," cried Jones, mad with the ignominious treatment he had met with, and now burning for revenge; "thieves who 've come to rob the hall, and murder you, squire, in your comfortwable bed."

"Hold your tongue, man, and get into the hall. And now, you sirrah; what do you mean by committing such an outrage as this upon my servant, before my own door. Do you know that I 'm a magistrate, and can send you all to the county jail?"

"Yes, your honor!" said big Toon, advancing, and taking off his hat. "We knows your honor 's a beak. Lord bless you! everybody knows that ere, in these parts, and far away beyond. And I wishes every other beak was as good a chap as you is. You see as we cummed along the road this morning, from the Danes' Dike, where my purty dog Tibby (savin' your honor's presence) lies dead and buried, — as purty a black and tan, your honor, as ever you set eyes on, and all along of Master Geordie's bull-mastiff there; as we was cumming from the Danes' Dike, we felt a kinder dry feelin' in our throats, and says Flamin' Nosey (that 's my brother, your honor, who is in trainin' for the belt of old England; him as jist now put the flunkey on his marrow-bones) says he to me, 'Squire Graham's hall 's close by, and the squire never turns a dry chap away with a empty belly, so let 's go and give him a tune this Burlington fair-morning, and be sure he 'll be hospitle and send us out a flag of beer to drink his health wi.' Well, we cummed and played the tune, — that is, Hiram did, — him with the stump, your honor, and a merry boy he be. Most of your honor's camp heered him play, and I 'll pound they liked it, — all 'cept yon long flunkey, who took on airs and set up for the squire, and called us thieves and 'picket-pockets,' and 'raggermuffins,' and other names not pleasant for gentl'men to hear, nor tawnies nuther. So brother Nosey made him beg pardon, and that 's the long and short on 't, your honor."

Turning to the servants who now stood round him, the squire asked if what the gypsy said were true, and they replied that it was.

"In that case," said he, "I will overlook this broil; and do you,

Mr. Thomas (the butler), see these men well served with beer and beef; and, mark me, let nobody wait upon them but Jones."

The gypsies gave a loud cheer, and followed the butler into the hall. It was a large room, lighted by six stately windows, and the walls were hung around with stags' heads and horns, and sundry old firelocks which, according to report, had done execution against the royalists in the wars of the Commonwealth. A huge coal fire was blazing up the wide and open chimney, suggesting to my mind many cosey gatherings on winter nights, and many Christmas feasts and festivities. Hiram was delighted at the turn which the adventure had taken, and at the good cheer in prospective. So he nursed his wooden leg, and chuckled and struck his fingers alternately into big 'Toon's ribs and mine, with a glee in his heart which just then could find no words to express it. At length he gave tongue: "Here 's a go! Ho! Lucky chals, me and my pals! Down on a flunkey, riz Nosey's monkey; in comes the squire, all afire! threatens to bag us, then lag us; and ends by makin' us drunky, — all on the morning of Burlington fair, O!"

At this moment in came Mr. Jones, quite chapfallen, but laden with beef and bread, and a full gallon pitcher of beer. The servants giggled, and Hiram was boisterous.

"Ho! six foot!" he bellowed, "set down the beer — here! And bring me a horn, all shaven and shorn, that tossed the cow so tattered and torn, from the head of a crumpled priest, O! I fill up the cup, — sup, pals, sup! Thank you, Master Stilts! and my very good civilities to you — boo! Now hand over the beef, and bring us another can, my tiny little cocker dandy man! For it 's my delight, of a shiny night, in the season of the year, — as the song says — queer!"

"That 'll do, Hiram," quoth Nosey. "Enough 's as good as a feast. Let the poor devil alone; mayhap he 'll be civil next time gentl'men tawnies comes a visitin' to the hall. Eh, Mr. Jones?"

Jones tried to laugh it off, but it would n't do. His face was sour and savage, and he bore the banter only because he could n't help himself.

The beer made my wild brethren tolerably merry; for they drank without stint. Before we rose to depart Hiram once more called Mr. Jones to the table, and thanking him with great politeness for the attention he had paid to such unwelcome guests, begged him, in the name of his pals, to accept a ha'penny for the services he had rendered; at the same time exhorting him not to be too proud over this sudden increase of wealth, seeing that "riches, in breeches, could fly, sky-high — my eye! So, flunkey, good-by!"

The fellow took the copper and was staring stupidly at it, with a half idiotic, half malicious smirk on his face, as we left the hall. On our way to the high-road we met the squire, and taking off our hats, thanked him for his generous treatment of us.

"It's all right, boys," said the squire. "I won't have anybody, rich or poor, insulted, who comes to my gates, ecod! And now, harkie! be merciful to my hares and partridges, and don't let me or my keepers catch you poaching. If you do, you know where away York castle lies, ecod!"

"Never fear, your honor," cried Toon, whom the beer had made bold and brave this morning. "No hare of your honor's shall ever come into Mabel's pot. And if you will take a present from a tawny, it'll go hard if big Toon don't bring the best greyhound to the hall that ever ran to match."

"No, no," said the squire, laughing and turning away, — his good, round, red face glistening brightly and genially in the sunshine, "that won't do. I must have no gypsy dogs about me. Good-day, men! good-day!" And so he walked away, firm and upright, towards his hall.

"A real good 'un is the old beak, and no mistake," said Nosey. "I should like to see any half-dozen Brids a meddlin' with the gray cock, or sayin' an ill word of him — that's all."

"The right spirit, Nosey," quoth I; "and spoke all out like a man. I never knew a tawny do evil for good since I've had the honor of a welcome to their tents; and when I do, I'll bid them good-day."

By this time we had reached the road and found our friends sitting comfortably under the hedge, which here about was laden with wild roses and honeysuckles, whose delicious odors scented all the neighborhood. The birds were singing sweetly, too; the sheep were cropping the rich grass in the adjacent meadows, and a halcyon calm reigned over the landscape. I thought the gypsies looked very pretty and picturesque in the old green lane, with these surroundings; and my thoughts were beginning to assume a poetical coloring, and to carry me back to the butterfly-catcher, when Ikey suddenly restored me to myself, as we journeyed once more towards Burlington, the fine town of which we could now see distinctly.

"A fine house be the big hall, Master Geordie," said he, as he edged himself alongside me. "And brother Ishmael says the beer bangs all he's ever tasted out of malt and hops."

"I dare say it was very good, Ikey. Squire Graham is noted all the country round for his good old ale. And a fine ancient chap he is."

"No doubt, Master Geordie. But there 's a finer she nor him at the hall, or I 'm no judge of a purty face."

"I don't understand you, Ikey. How do you know that a purty she lives at the hall? Squire Graham has n't any babies, old or young, that I ever heerd of. He lives alone a blessed bachelor."

"Batchledore, or no batchledore, Ikey can believe his own eyes, and the purty she cummed from the hall."

"What do you mean, Ikey?" I asked, now growing interested in his talk, and not a little curious.

"Ask Ina, Master Geordie. She knows the secret, and Ikey must n't tell all he saw for fear his purty cousin sud be angry with him. But Ikey knows."

At this moment Ina cast a look towards us, and Ikey sneaked away behind, saluting me as he went with the expressive monosyllable, "Mum," intended, I suppose, to be in the imperative mood. So I walked carelessly up to Ina, but she had her wits about her and saw the move, and opened fire upon me immediately without warning.

"What 's that gowdy bawkey been a sayin' of to you, Master Geordie? I seed him, and know'd by the winkles of his eye that he was arter no good."

"He says that a purty she lives at the hall, and that cousin Ina knows something about her which he dare n't tell for fear his dearie should pull his black locks for him. What does the chal mean, Ina?"

"What, indeed, Master Geordie! A likely thing that a fine lady, — purty, does he call her, the jay bird! What does he know about a purty lady? A likely thing that a fine lady sud go for to talk to a poor, plain gal like me, indeed."

"Never mind Ikey, sister; I know somebody with bright eyes, beautiful brown hair, and red lips, made to be kissed, who might hold up her head with any lady in the land."

"Gammon, Master Geordie," said she, interrupting my gallant speech. "I 'se not a lady, and she as cummed from the hall was, and a fine lady, too, though Ikey ought n't to say so."

"Of course he ought n't. What did she come to my beautiful sister Ina for, this fair lady from the hall?"

"Well, as you 're sich a nice spoken chap, Master Geordie, I don't mind a tellin' you that she gived me a letter to take to Myra when we comes back at nightfall."

"A letter, Ina? And did n't she say anything about it?"

"Yes. She said she 'd seed the chaps a goin' to the hall, as she

was lookin' out of her window, and she know'd um again. So, as she wanted to speak to Myra, she runned across the meadow, and when she found Myra was n't here, she gived me the letter for her."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, Master Geordie."

"Did n't she want an answer?"

"No; but she gived me a gouden guinea, and teld me to be sure and give Myra the letter. And a sweet, purty lady she wur, though Ikey says so."

As we were now approaching the town, our company separated by previous arrangement, and departed in little groups for the better transaction of business. Toon, Nosey, and myself remained together.

CHAPTER VIII.

BOOTHIES AND FAIR SCENERY.

EVEN at this early hour in the morning — for it was not yet seven o'clock — the old town was full of excitement, and business men hurried to and fro as if the fate of England hung upon their activity and despatch. Carts and wagons laden with goods, gigs and horsemen, droves of bullocks, sheep, and horses poured into the town through all its avenues. The public-houses were crowded with visitors, and the steam of roasting meats, mingled with the odors of beer and tobacco, saluted the nostrils in every quarter. The fair was held in a large meadow on the south side of the town, and thitherward we directed our steps. It was an old-fashioned English fair, having long lines of drinking-booths, intersecting each other, and extending over an area of about half a mile. Stalls of fancy goods and gingerbread and sweetmeats, of Sheffield cutlery and Leeds broadcloth, and innumerable miscellaneous bazaars decorated the main thoroughfares; and at the extreme end of this populous town of canvas were erected the tents of the mountebanks and poor players, and those of the jugglers and the pugilistic artists, whilst all around them, in a wide circle, were arranged the yellow canvas of the showman and wild-beast tamers. Behind these were the quoit-grounds and rifle-tunnels, and the circle where the game of sticks was played. So many sticks, placed upright in holes, with a tobacco-box, or knife, or other article of the kind balanced on the top of the sticks; and whoso flinging a staff at them within a given distance struck them so that said articles fell outside the holes, pocketed them for his skill, having previously paid his penny for the chance.

By the time we had completed the circle of the fair it was thronged with visitors. There were country Johnny Raws in blue smocks and beaver hats, arm in arm with rosy-cheeked lassies, dressed out in best bibs and tuckers, having posies in their hands, or pinned neatly over their bosoms. Yeomen and well-to-do farmers, and young blood chaps, their sons, who carried hunting-whips under their arms, and wore Newmarket coats and kerseymere breeches and gaiters, or top-

boots; cattle-drovers with short black pipes in their hats, armed with stout ash-plants, followed by shaggy and faithful coney dogs. Blind men and ballad-singers, thimblerigs, and those unmistakable blackguards who go from fair to fair, all the year round, veritable boothies, who, like Wordsworth's Peter Bell, have the mark of men who dwell out of doors upon them, and are incarnations of all conceivable sensuality, dissipation, and priggery; fellows with threadbare coats and dogskin waistcoats, and broken hats; generally pitted with the small pox, as if the Devil had been treading on their faces in nailed shoes; their hair long, curly, and unctuous with oily lubrications; their cheeks recently cut, or their eyes blacked; altogether incorrigible rips, who live by lying and stealing.

Such was the motley throng of folks we saw thus early at the fair, and being tired we presently entered a drinking-booth and took our seats at one of the vacant benches. It was a large booth, and might hold four hundred persons. The seats and tables were of the rudest sort, made of rough pine wood, and supported by ground stakes. On the left of us was the bar-room, where the landlord and his waiters gave out the beer and spirituals; and straight before us was the huge fireplace, where an old woman was roasting a round of beef and frying sausages.

My pals were dry as usual, and called for a quart of ale. So I filled my pipe and sat quietly by whilst they drank. There was plenty of company present, mostly engaged in making bargains, although not a few were simply enjoying themselves with their country cousins. As we each sat and talked, scores of fair followers entered, pursuing each his vocation. Women and girls with baskets on their arms, full of gingerbread-nuts and Barcelonas, crying them aloud in shrill voices, which rose high above the general din and confusion; piemen in white hats and aprons, having a tin oven, heated by a charcoal fire, lashed before them, calling out continually: "Pies all hot, gentlemen! Eel-pie, beef-pie, mutton-pie, veal-pie! All hot! all hot!" And jostling against one of these worthies was a "Chelsea-bun" man, perhaps, singing the praises of his bread ware; "Chelsea-buns! Chelsea-buns! All piping hot Chelsea-buns!" And these had no sooner vanished than they were followed by ballad-singers, hurdygurdy players, and blind beggar-men, who, turning up their white-livered eyes, made long mournful speeches about their misery, mixing them with "kind Christian friends," and "the Lord," and the good of coppers. Then there were tumblers and conjurers, rigged in spangled jackets, with their cups and balls, whirling dag-

gers and spinning plates, exhibiting or ready to exhibit. By and by a fiddler came in, and then the country lads and lasses rose and went behind us where the dancing-floor was laid, and had a merry, noisy, and, I have no doubt, happy jig.

While the dancing was going on, a burly, red-faced, big-bellied man entered, in a broad-brimmed hat, wearing goodly knee-breeches, brown gaiters, and shoes fastened with silver buckles. He walked inside a scaffolding of hoops, attached to which were whips of all sorts; gig-whips, cart-whips, dog-whips, and hunting-stocks. Dog chains and collars, snaffle and curb bridles, currycombs and other stable furniture were suspended from his neck; and it was clear that he not only was, but also thought he was, a person of weight and importance in the fair. I thought so too, and so did my companions.

"Lookee!" said Nosey, as the man approached us; "seed you ever the like o' that, brother Toon? Here 's a walkin' knackers' shop. Twig him! brother, twig him! and then tell a chap howiver he makes a clean course through the daddies outside. I say," he added, calling to the imperturbable whip-dealer, who moved along as slowly as a loaded wagon; "come up here to the scratch, old feller, and let 's look at your fads."

"All i' good time, master," replied the man, as he walked slowly towards us, "all i' good time. I 'se in no hurry; and if I war, thar 's no use i' fashin. I 'se a natural sweater, you see, wi' my corperrashun; and if I tewed much I sud go off i' steam sich a warm day as this ere is. I sud like to sell you summuts nevertheless," said he, pulling up at last where we sat. "What is it yer fancy, loick? Bein' gypsy chaps, you deals i' hosses, mayhap; and if you dew, here 's things 'll suit your minds. So pick away."

"You takes it easy, master," said Toon, as Nosey began to admire the stock. "And you looks dry, too, though you sweats a deal. Will you drink?"

"Yes I will, my chap, and thankee," he replied, taking off his big hat and wiping with a red pocket-handkerchief his head and face, which literally streamed with perspiration. "I 'se fond o' a sup a beer, there 's nowt like it, hot days or cool, wet or dry. It strengthens a body up; and is, as I may say, a Englishman's nateral drink, beer is. Beats cowd warter holler. Here 's to yer!" he added, with a broad grin on his old Yorkshire face; and then he took a long, strong, deep pull at the quart pot, and seemed powerfully refreshed after his draught.

"You 're no friend to the teetotallers, I see, mister," quoth I.

"And yet water was made before beer, and men grew strong on it."

"Not i' my time, young man. I never knowed a cowd water drinker who did n't die o' the rot. And as for these d—d tee—tee—tee—, it chokes me to think o' the word, much maire to speak it, and I can't get it out; as for them chaps, I say, who goes about given folks the belly-ache and preachin' abstinence from the very thing as 'ud cure it, seems to me they ought to be taen up as enemies to the cuntree, and made to live i' hoss-ponds, sin they 're so fond o' cowd water."

Whereupon we all laughed outright, for I knew it was no use to reason with the Yorkshire man, even had I been inclined to do so, which I was not. So I called for a bottle of ginger-beer, when the following discourse ensued: —

Nosey. "What 's the price o' this bran-new spankin dog-collar, mister?"

Yorkshireman. "Two shillin'. Ginger-beer, eh? (turning to me with an expression of visible disdain in his face.)

Nosey. "That 's too much. I don't min' givin' you a bob for it, — not that I want it; only it 's a purty gimcrack."

Yorkshireman. "Can't take no less. Why, young man, (turning again to me,) you arn't i' arnest, sure-ly, to call for ginger-beer? It 's nub but old stale and wind, arn't ginger-beer! an it 'll blow yer up like bustin'. I think shame on yer — ye a gypsy chap, too — settin' sich a bad example at fair time."

Toon. "Niver mind our pal, mister. He alus do as he likes — and so does we. Take a bob for the dog-collar, mister."

Yorkshireman. "Can't do it. Cost me more money."

Nosey. "Well then, a bob and a pint."

Toon. "Ay, ay! say a bob and a pint. If my little terrier, which was a real black and tan, master, and the best dog in all Yorkshire, though he be dead and buried in Danes' Dike, the purty fond beautie! if he 'd been alive I might ha' made the pint a quart myself, but now he 's dead I ain't the heart."

Nosey. "Come, old chap, here 's the tin. So ho, there! you waiter dandy, bring another pint."

Yorkshireman. "Well, to wash the thought o' that ginger-beer out o' my mouth and set a good example to your pal there, damme if I don't sell you the collar, so there it be."

Myself. "Good, I like an honest man, whether he drinks beer or water. An out-and-out fellow for my money, and no shilly shally."

Yorkshireman. "Yer one o't richt soort I do believe, arter all, young 'un. So here 's my fist, and harkee! if yer sud hev the belly-ache, it may be a warnin' of chollerray-mortbus; so gang ye away direcklety to 't brandy-bottle and drink yoursen bleend drunk. It 's the best thing ye can do, and the ony cure I knows for 't ginger-beer disease. Good-day t' ye, men, good-day."

So saying the easy old chap walked slowly off to seek other customers.

He had n't left us many moments when Squire Graham's head groom entered with a downy-looking horse-dealer, and taking a seat before us they were soon engaged in earnest talk. I knew the groom directly by his livery, and so I told my pals who he was. They wanted to treat him forthwith in recompense for the squire's hospitality; but I would not hear of it, for it looked to me rather suspicious that he should be in such company, and I thought that, without playing the eavesdropper, we might overhear something that would enlighten us as to their business. And so it turned out; for we presently heard the groom say, "Eighty pounds! why I 've been offered a cool hundred for her already, and I means to hev one hundred and twenty, if I sells her."

"You 'll get a pretty pickin' out on her, Mister Corby, at that rate, and if I bought her she 'd leave me no profit."

"Nonsense! she 's worth nearer two hundred than one-fifty; and you knows where the market lies for such as her."

"Well I do, that 's sarten. But cum now, Mr. Corby, be content with a twenty-pund note for yoursen and tak' a hundred. I 'll make it a hundred. I lost by the last horse you seld me, and you sud gi'e me a chance."

"Well, then, I 'll split the difference and make it one hundred and ten," said the groom.

"That leaves you thirty pund profit, Mister Corby. The squire says, she 's to go for eighty, and you sells her for thirty pund more nor he axes; which is all very well for you, but it does nothin' for me."

"O, very well," said the groom, rising in a huff, "if you won't buy her, I know who will."

"Don't be angry, Mister Corby," cried the jockey, now alarmed lest he should lose the horse by his dillydallying. "I did n't say I would n't give a hundred and ten; but you 'll tip me a five-pounder as back money, won't you?"

"Well, I don't mind, as you 're a regular buyer, and knows how to

be discreet and keep a still tongue in your head. Is it a bargain?"

"Done!" was the rejoinder. "You 'll give a warranty, and I 'll accept it as if I 'd bought her for eighty pound."

"Ay, ay! all right."

And so the bargain was completed.

"Well," said Nosey, when they left the booth, "that ere 's cool dealin' — that is; an' bangs cockfightin'. What say you, brothers. Shall we see the old squire robbed in this ere way and act dummie?"

"Devil a bit!" replied Toon; "it 'd be bad payins back to him for the good beef and almighty strong beer which he was a treatin' of us to this mornin'. He 's a old hand that ere groom, and this ain't the fust time your jockey an he has had dealin's together."

"By gom!" said Nosey, "I should like to belk the pair on 'em, and so I would in a brace of shakes, if it warn't for spiling the fun when that groom goes afore the squire on our peachin'!"

"Well, you undertake to tell the squire, brother Nosey?"

"Will a duck swim, Master Geordie? As sure as I gived Lankey Bob his gruel arter a dozen rounds, will I tell the squire, in company of my pals now present, afore he goes to roost this Burlington fair night."

"Wait till the mornin', brother!" said Toon, dryly; "it 'd be a mortal pity to spile Master Corby's sleep, arter sich a hard day's work; and get him sent to limbo jest as he 's made a nice little fortin. You 've got no marcy i' your bowels, brother Nosey, to be so down on the groom chap."

"Plenty for his needins," replied Nosey; "so put yoursens in order fur more beef and beer, brothers; fur unto the hall we go."

"I should like to see the horse that 'll fetch a hundred and ten pounds as a sly bargain, and leave the buyer a good chance of profit besides," said I. "She must be a rare beast, and I wonder why the squire wants to part with her."

"Too sprity for him, mayhap," replied Toon. "I 've know'd a hoss seld for fifty cos he wus a leettle mettlesum, as arterwards fetched two hundred, and worth the dubs. I sud like to see this hoss o' the squire's, too. Sull we go?"

"With all my heart," said Nosey, rising, and squelching his wide-awake hat clean over his eyes. "I 'm ready."

So we strolled out towards the horse-fair, which was held in an adjoining field. The horses stood with their heads tied to the railed fences; some single, in separate stalls; and some in strings of eight

or ten, tied or loose, as the case might be. Others again, with blue, red, and white ribbons braided into their manes and tails, were being led or ridden by their owners, who were on the lookout for customers.

Some were being tried at their paces, trotting, cantering, and galloping over the grass, and through crowds of people who had hardly time or room to get out of their way; whilst the riders hallooed and rattled their whips inside their hats, over the horses' heads, doing their best to scare them into fury and madness. Men and horses, indeed, seemed equally excited; and such a hubbub of oaths and vociferations, and shoutings, and chaffering voices it would be hard to match in any other scene. I have often wondered, on seeing the recklessness and daring, the perfectly mad manner in which horses are ridden at such times, that accidents of a serious nature do not frequently occur. But they are rare; and one old dealer, who had attended fairs for forty years, once told me that he never remembered any accident worth calling such, through all that long period of time.

My pals did n't like the appearance of the horses, and it was amusing to hear big Toon's remarks about them. He was up to horse-flesh; and twigged flaws and bad points at a glance.

"There ain't a good horse i' the fair, Master Geordie," he said; "unless we can find that downy Corby wi' the squire's tit. They 're all lean or old, or spavined, or broken-kneed, or touched i' the wind, or downright roarers. And lookee! last time I seed this hoss right afore us, he was as white as a sheep's back; and now you see they 've changed him into a dirty brown; and cropped his mane and tail, so that his owner would n't know him again. That hoss is stole, Master Geordie."

"Stolen! Well, Toon, then why don't you have the thief taken into trap, if you surely know it to be stolen?"

"Wus luck! Master Geordie. "It's not i' my line to turn thief-catcher; and who 'd believe a gypsy if I were to make a wag i' the fair about it?"

"Do you know the fellow who has him now?"

"Know him! Ay, many 's the long day; and a sorry rogue he be, wi' the evil eye in his head."

Further explanation was prevented by Nosey, who suddenly called our attention to the squire's groom as he came riding towards us on a fine black blood mare.

"O, the beauty!" cried Toon, as he got a fair look at her; O, the

purty beauty! What a head and neck; what clean fore and hind quarters; what a almighty chest, and fine carcass; what legs and action! I knows her sire, brother Nosey; she was got by the 'Flyin' Dutchman,' — no matter the dam, — an' she favors him from top to toe, the delicate, proud beauty!"

"Shall I bid for her, brother Toon? O, ay, I shall bid for her. Look out for the spree. Hey there! you mister! what's the price o' the black mare?"

The groom pulled up a moment, and looked with ineffable contempt at Nosey, as he replied, "Two hundred, sir. Would you please to buy her?"

"Is she sound?" asked Nosey, as if he fell into the trap, and believed the man's civility were real, and that he was anxious to sell the horse.

"Sound as a roach, sir! I warrant her."

"Her price warrants her," said Nosey; "and though she's a fine beast the figure 's too high, good man. I would n't mind givin' you a hundred for her."

"And pray where would you get the money from, if I was to say done?"

"What's that to you, and be d—d to you?" replied Nosey, rather sharply. "Will you sell the mare for a hundred?"

"On tick, I suppose," said the groom, tauntingly.

"No, puppy! Cash down on the nail. Yes or no? Speak, and mind you be civil this time."

"Well, *no!* and as for civility, since you've d—d me, I say no, I won't, and be d—d to *you*, mister red nose."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when Nosey knocked him off his horse, as clear as if he'd flung him out of his arms over the saddle. The mare took fright, and made a dash forward; but big Toon caught her by the bridle, and almost instantly quieted her. Meanwhile, the groom picked himself up, and began to show fight; for he was a stout fellow, and no coward. "A ring! a ring!" was the cry of the by-standers; and in a few seconds a ring was formed, and the groom stripped to his buff. Nosey, however, made no preparation of any sort, but stood laughing at his antagonist, who, white hot, put himself into position, and stood squaring close to his second, bidding Nosey come to the scratch if he "war n't a coward." A fellow from the crowd came forward and offered to second Nosey, but he refused; and stood still with his hands in his pockets, laughing and mocking the groom, till the crowd could bear it no longer,

but cried out: "Coward, coward! Go in, groom! Go into him, and win!" Thus encouraged, the groom advanced within distance, and struck out with his left hand, which was meant for Nosey's right lug, and then with his right, which, if it had gone home, would have blacked both his peepers; but both blows were stopped, as quick as lightning; and paid back with interest, one, two, three; the last a woful body blow, which felled the groom, and fairly tucked him up, so that he would come no more.

Nosey then asked him if he'd had enough. "I don't often give sich small change for civilities like yourn, Master Corby," he added, "but I have n't yet done wi' you; and you're welcome to what you've got, by way of a 'stalment. So, good-day till we meet again."

Toon gave up the mare to his second, whilst the groom dressed, and we left the ground; the people making way very respectfully for us as we passed along. They had found out that Nosey, at least, was dangerous, and they admired his pluck.

"I was glad," said I, "that you did n't pound that fellow more. I was afraid, at first, that you would forget yourself and lose temper. I admire your forbearance, and think he got no more than he deserved."

"No more he did, Master Geordie. An' if it had n't been for the trick we means to play him this evening, he would n't a got off so easy. Won't he stare when he sees me and my pals afore the beak, his master, a peachin' on him! Won't he? that's all."

We were once more in the neighborhood of the drinking-booths, and in a few minutes Toon called out: "There's old Hiram's fiddle and leetle Ina's tamborreen. No mistakin' o' that music. Come, brothers, I'm very dry; let's go and drink in the booth, and see what our pals is arter."

We stole in unperceived, and beheld Hiram in his glory, fiddling away at the top of his bent to three or four couples of dancers, whilst Ina played the tambourine. Here, too, was Ikey whirling a braw country lass round and round, and up and down the floor, without mercy, although it was clear that, being fat and tight-laced, she had had enough of it, and was suffering a martyrdom of torture. As for the rest, they seemed to enjoy themselves amazingly; and I for my part was much amused with their uncouth movements. As soon as they had finished there was loud calling for much beer, — pints and quarts in abundance, and "penn'orths of 'baccer." The "musicianers" must, of course, drink first; and one young man, I noticed, was

particularly attentive to Ina, and praised her beauty till I wondered that Ikey, who was close by, did not grow jealous and interfere with his gallantry. Not a bit of it, however; he laughed and chaffed, and smoked, and swigged his beer, as if he cared no more for Ina than a post. The young man was getting bolder and bolder, and finally put his arm round Ina's waist, whispering something in her ear at the same time.

"No, no!" said she, releasing herself good-humoredly from the young man; "that won't do. It's too soon to take a walk, and I can't spare no kisses."

"Whist! whist!" was the reply, as the speaker looked foolishly round about the company; "they'll hear what you say."

"Who cares!" said Ina; "let um hear, an' welcome. A Rommany gal niver does what she's a-goin' for to be ashamed of. Hear him, Ikey!" she added, turning to her dusky cousin, who was half buried in tobacco-smoke; "this young chap wants me to take a walk along wi' him, and says he'll gie me a shillin' for every kiss he gets."

"Well, why don't you let him kiss away, cousin? I'll stan' by and count um, and pocket the brads."

The young man looked more sheepish than ever, and had n't a word to say for himself, but sat staring across the booth, smoking ferociously, and in evident fear, shame, and trembling.

"You hear what my pal says?" quoth Ina, addressing him, and enjoying his distress. "So now, dearie, begin to take the purty kisses, the delicate, ripe kisses, at a shillin' a piece, and worth the money." So saying, she bent her beautiful head so that her hair swept his cheek, and kept in that posture for a moment, her brown, laughing eyes turned to his, but all to no purpose. The youth was frozen in his seat, nor did he give any sign of thawing until the people near by, who witnessed the scene, set up a loud horse-laugh, and began to taunt him for a simpleton. Then he could bear no more, but rose up on a sudden, and rushed out of the booth.

"Well played, little Ina," said I, stepping from my seat and patting her on the back. "But was n't it a dangerous game? Ain't you afraid of making Ikey jealous?"

"What's Ikey to me, Master Geordie? And if he was ever so much to me, what cause has he to be jealous? Jealous, indeed! an' of a gaw like that! No, no! Master Geordie. All goes free out o' the tents. We has to get our livin's, an' take an' give."

And so I always found it with the gypsies. Nor do I believe that the women ever practise any immorality of the sexual kind, either

for love or money. They make what they can out of the bushnies, but they do not sell their persons.

Hiram caught my eyes as I went back to my seat, and in another instant he was climbing over the benches with his wooden leg, giving sundry halloos and whoops by the way, until he had joined us, much to the amusement of the company.

"A merry day, boys! a merry day! and lots of pay, boys, for the piper! So let us drink, till we wink, and here's the chink! Bring a quart! Ho! waiter! And a drop o' summut short — put in it — this minit. Cut your stick — quick!"

The beer was brought, and soon drank, but it seemed to have no effect upon the tawnies, and might as well have been water, to all appearance, for that matter. Hiram's fiddle was soon wanted again, and so he had to leave us just as he was about to call for another quart; and I was n't sorry.

It was now getting dusk, and so we started off at once for the hall, on our way home.

CHAPTER IX.

ACCIDENT BY THE WAY.—PEACHMENT OF MR. CORBY.

JUST at the outskirts of the town, whilst Toon was whistling a gypsy air, and Nosey was laying down the law and mode of procedure which he meant to follow in the case of the Squire *versus* Mr. Corby, we were suddenly startled by loud shouts and the thunder of horses' feet roaring along the hard road. Turning round we saw a carriage coming toward us, whirled along by a pair of horses at full gallop. In a few moments they would be up to us, and there was no time for deliberation as to what was to be done. So we all stood still by the side of the road, and no one spoke a word, although I saw by big Toon's eye that something was in the wind, and felt sure an attempt would be made to stop the horses, on the part of one or both of my comrades. Nearer and nearer they came, and louder and louder grew the cries; and now they are upon us. Merciful God! it is the squire and my beautiful Psyche, hurrying thus to sudden and violent death! In a moment I was up behind the carriage, —into the back seat—into the front seat—the reins in my hands, —and behold! dragging at the off-horse's bridle, swings big Toon. He will be dashed to pieces under the fiery hoofs of the maddened horses. They shake their necks and bound, and rear; the foam flying over their bodies like flakes in a snow-storm. Away they dash, madder than ever. But, hurrah! Toon has managed to get one leg round the carriage-pole, still holding on to the bridle; and now he vaults to the off-horse's back, and seizing the bridle with both hands, ills at the maddened brute's jaw until the pain masters him, and ne slackens his speed. Then, with his left hand he grasps the bridle of the near horse, and, finally, bringing both hands short to the reins, he draws the horses' heads close together, and they drop into a smart trot,—and the danger is over.

"Thank you, young man! I thank you with all my heart," said the squire, as I gave up the reins; and then, addressing big Toon, he said, "That 'll do, my man! that 'll do; I can manage them now. And mind, you don't pass the hall to-night without calling, ecod."

So Toon slipped off the horse and ran some distance beside the carriage, fearing his services might be required again. He then fell off and went back to meet Nosey, who was far behind. I would have got out of the carriage, too, but the squire insisted upon my accompanying them to the hall, and his beautiful charge added her wishes to the same effect. She knew me directly as the gypsy who had met her on the heath, and the squire recognized me and Toon as his guests of the morning. So I felt quite at home, although I did not forget to remember my character in her presence.

"O, young man!" said the lady, as soon as she had partially recovered from her fright, "how shall we sufficiently thank you and your brave companion? Words are a very poor return for such services as you have rendered us; and I am sure the squire, as well as myself, would be really happy if we could reward you in any way."

"Don't mention it, young lady," quoth I. "It ain't worth thinkin' about. And as for reward, why, you sees, we makes it a rule to do good to them as does good to us, and never thinks o' the change unless we 've got it to pay, and then we keeps our eyes open for the next chance of a bargain, and don't mind givin' a lump or two in."

"Well, that 's generous in you," she replied; "and it is doubtless more blessed to give than receive; but the debt is now on the wrong side, and we must make it as even as we can."

"I das' say the purty lady-bird means it all right," said I; "and she 'd rather deal out the gowdies with her own lily-white hand than tak 'um; but it 's hard lines that poor gypsies can't do a good turn without bein' paid for 't. Maybe your leddyship don't like to be 'holden to the poor gypsy chaps."

"There you wrong me; indeed you do!" she replied, with warmth. "I am thankful for the meanest service, much more for this of yours."

"Then that 's pay enough, my lady, and neither me nor my pal 'ud have any more if you was made of gold inside and out."

Once more our eyes met, as I uttered these words, and once more came the mystic recognition. She looked so beautiful, and her large blue eyes shone with such glorious lustre that I could not help betraying the deep emotion that I felt in gazing upon her. I thought she blushed slightly; she was certainly confused, like one who experiences feelings for which she cannot account. All this was momentary, however; and it instantly dispersed, as the squire, speaking to the lady, replied: "Let the gypsy lad have his own way, Violet.

We may yet have the chance of serving him or his; and if we should not, why then we can still be grateful and remain the gypsies' debtors."

We soon reached the hall, and as the squire drove up to the front, a groom in attendance took charge of the horses, whilst our friend Mr. Jones opened the carriage door, and the squire and the lady alighted. I had already jumped down behind, and was about to retreat, when the squire caught hold of my collar.

"Not so, young man!" he said; "this way, if you please." And then addressing the groom he ordered him to be very gentle with the horses. "They have run away with me," he added, "and are still very fretful. You must soothe them down, Tom; they won't bear chafing." He then led the way into the house; Miss Violet, as he called the lady, taking his arm, whilst I followed in the rear, to the utter amazement of Mr. Jones, who could scarcely believe his own eyesight, when he saw the distinguished honor paid to me.

"Show this young man into the library, Jones," said the squire, as we crossed the hall. "I will join you before long," he added, speaking to me. And then addressing Jones once more, he said, "Tell Mr. Thomas to bring up half a dozen of the red-seal port." And so saying, he vanished with the lady, and I was ushered into the library.

"I hope you don't bear malice, Mr. Jones?" said I, addressing that gentleman, as he adjusted the old-fashioned chairs. "My pals was a leetle hard on you this morning; but there was faults on both sides, you know; and we ought to forgive and forget."

"So we ought, mister! so we ought. And I bears no malice I assuwers you. But Lord blwess me, who 'd ha' thwort of seein' on you agin to-night, and a waitin' on you in the squire's own library, where nobody ever comes but Miss Violent. And then to think of the squire's ordering half a dozen of the old stingwo for you and him. Sich a thing has not happened before i' my twime. Six bottles! Lord, what a drinkwer you must be! which I should n't suppose you was able to drink five bottles, to look at you! No offence mister, I hope?"

"Not a bit of it, Mister Jones. But what makes you think that 'm a goin' for to drink five bottles to my own cheek?"

"Why, you sees, the squire never drinks no more nor one bottle at any twime; and on ordinwerry occasions, only a few glasses."

"And so you thinks I must drink up the difference, do you? Why what a swill-tub you must suppose me to be, Mister Jones.

Howsumiver, you reckons without your host; and as the squire ordered the wine, he can best tell what he means to do with it. What was that you said just now about the pretty lady? Does she live at the hall?"

"O! Miss Violent! No, she does n't live here. She 's only on a viswit. The squire be her uncle. She lives at Edwinstow, in Sherwood Forest, where Robin Hood used to go a huntin' and a robbin', — livin' with his men a free wild life, just fur all the world as you gypsies does, — and no offence, mister."

"No offence taken where none is meant. I knows old Sherwood Forest like a book, and all the big oaks and pretty birches of Berkland and Bilhaugh, and the white-thorn forest of Budby, and the rest of the tree kiddies, and glades, and lanes, and villages, and halls and abbeys. Lord! Lord! how mighty grand the old forest be, hard by Edwinstow! You should see it in June month, Mister Jones! when the gorse is in full bloom, and all the glades is afire with its golden blossoms, and the air is laden with their sweet scent, and the birds is all a singin' in the trees. Many a day has me and my pals tented in that neighborhood."

"I should think you was born there, to hear how you does but talk about it. And it makes me fweel as if I should like to turn a vagerbond gypsy myself almost, — that is to say, not quite, — for it must be purticarly unpleasant on dwark nights."

"All depends, for that matter, on custom and a man's nateral breedin', you see, Mister Jones. How may they call the young lady, Miss Violet? What 's her other name?"

"Pierpoinwt is her proper family name. And they do say, as I 've heerd, that her father, now dead and gwon, poor gentleman, was the true heir to the Manvwers estate and tituel; although I don't know, and it is n't for the likes of me to speak about it."

I knew, however, the whole history of the Pierpoint family. Pierpoint being the family name of the present Lord Manvers, and one of my dearest friends was intimate with the deceased father of Miss Pierpoint. All this was strange enough, and the singularity of the circumstances in which the present revelation was made struck me very powerfully. Here was another link between us; and Myra's prophecy and my own deep conviction were so much nearer to their fulfilment. So certain was I of it, that although every time I saw this beautiful Violet I felt a deeper and still deeper affection for her, — or perhaps I should say a still deeper interest in her, as one doomed to be mine, — for I could not be said yet to love her as I

have since loved her; so certain, I say, was I that she would ultimately be mine, that I never for a moment doubted it; and all the dramatic accessories which the good Fates seemed to think essential to the consummation of their plot, whilst they interested me in their development, looked so much like poetical artifice, that I sometimes caught myself laughing at the absurdity of the farce. I was chief actor, and stood behind the scenes and knew all about the play; and yet I was supposed to know nothing about it, and to act like a puppet, in obedience to strings pulled by invisible hands. Well, it was all right; and I cared not what drolls I performed nor at what instigation, for I saw clearly that I should be "in at the death," as the fox-hunters say.

Mister Jones now left the library, and I began to examine the books on the shelves, which I found to be of a promiscuous character, and not likely to be very attractive to a lady reader. One book I took down out of curiosity. It was "Tom Jones," and I saw with pleasure that it had been well read; although clearly enough not by Miss Violet. It bore the squire's autograph, and his crest was stamped on the inner cover. It was evidently a favorite, and was thumbed in a most loving manner. I was delighted to meet the dear old book in the squire's mansion; and loved him because I saw he loved it. Matchless book! Prince royal of all novels! The most perfect picture of real life ever presented upon paper! Turning to the table, I found a copy of "Emerson's Essays," with a preface by Carlyle, which had been published only a few weeks. This also was in the course of being read, and well read, for there were marginal marks against many of the most beautiful passages; and in several instances annotations were added, and expressions of admiration, all in a female hand. A pretty "mark," composed of colored silks, and inscribed with the legend, "Lift the Veil," was left in the book, between the leaves of the essay quaintly called "Oversoul"; and I had no doubt who was the reader of it. The fact, however, took me altogether by surprise, for up to this moment I had no idea of the character of Miss Violet's mind, nor of her reading. How, indeed, should I? I had, as yet, been brought into no relations of equality and intimacy with her; and she regarded me in no other light than that of an ignorant gypsy; whilst I looked upon her as a good and beautiful, but in no wise as a highly gifted person. Here, however, was evidence that she was something more than an ordinary beauty, and that her intellect was capable of entertaining, if not of originating, great truths and philosophical questions. This book had been

my own companion, and the almost exclusive study of my leisure hours, from the first day of its publication, and a copy of it was now lying in my gypsy tent by the Dane's Dike. Here was another remarkable link in the chain that surrounded us, and one which I least of all suspected. How I longed for the time when I should speak to her face to face, and without disguise. That time, however, would come shortly, and I had already determined the occasion.

It was now about nine o'clock, and I began to think it long before the squire returned. To wile away the time I looked out of the window upon the park, which stretched away in rich pasturage and fine woodland groups to the rocky cliffs, — beyond which the great sea lay weltering in the moonlight. Beautiful roses looked in at the window-panes; the deer were grouped in silent companies under the trees, or in the open pasture land; rabbits were frisking over the lawn, or cropping fearlessly the dewy grass; and in the neighboring copse a nightingale was pouring out her rich, gushing melodies into the listening ear of night, and into my very heart and soul. I opened the window, and sat down on the sill, that I might enjoy the banquet more fully. The air was laden with the perfume of the roses, and I abandoned myself to all these influences, and remained there, I do not know exactly how long, like one entranced. I was suddenly roused, however, by the touch of a light hand on my shoulder. Miss Violet had stolen upon me unperceived, and broke the charm of my reverie, by saying: "I see your familiarity with Nature has not made her presence dull and uninteresting to you. Do you often hear the nightingale?"

"Not i' these parts, young lady," I replied, rising from my seat; "and he be a rare bird, the nightingale be; and I loves to hear him sing. There's no other bird i' the woods and hedges and orchards of England has half so purty a song; jug, jug, jug! and then a tirra-lilla, and a wild kind of delight bursting out of his throat, clear and full, and so sweet that the very heavens and all the stars seem to listen to him, and the woods is still, and the air trembles till you can a'most feel it; and a man's heart trembles too, and he wonders what makes that particular bird sing i' that fashion."

"I'm glad you like my favorite bird. He does not often come, as you say, into these regions; but I live in a country where he stays all the summer months, and the old forest is alive with his melodies both by day and night. You've heard of Sherwood Forest, I dare say, and perhaps have camped there."

"Heard of old Sherwood, my lady! Ay, indeed, have I, and

many 's the day me and my pals has slept in the green lanes 'mong the gorse-bushes that grows there. I knows all about the old forest; and have heard the nightingale sing i' the oaks of Bilhaugh when my pals was all asleep, and no foot was astir on the greensward but mine; and no sound was in the forest glades but his music; 'cept the tu-whit-tu-woo of the night owl, and the distant bark of the old red fox, or the bayin' of the watch-dog at the Buck Gates."

"Admirable! Why, you are a real lover of Nature, and feel and relish her beauty in a right healthy manner. Do your companions care as much about these things as you do?"

"Not exactly, young lady; though they likes to be out o' doors, and a watchin' o' things. 'Specially on shiny nights, when the game is easy seen. They has an eye for Nature too; for they alus manages to pitch their tents in the purtiest spot they can find; and some on um's no fools I can tell you, my lady, though they be ignorant gypsies and hev no book larnin'."

"That I can very well believe; and I want to know more about you all. Who was that handsome girl, for instance, who told me my fortune at the tents yesterday? I was very much interested in her, although she frightened me a good deal."

"That was my sister Myra, young lady; who is, as you say, a han'some gal, and reads the stars, and knows all things that happen to folks. A real wise gal is Myra; and mighty terrible at times, when the shadow of the Great Name is on her."

"And you think she can tell what is to happen to people in the future — do you?"

"I knows it, lady. Myra's lips never blab with lies."

"You heard what she said to me on the green. Do you believe all that will come true?"

"Hush, lady! Do not doubt the words of the Unseen, because they comes through a poor gypsy gal."

"You believe them, then?"

"As I believe in the Great Name."

"It is very strange. I thought it could not be true; and yet her emotion was real, and could not have been affected. Why did she tremble so and seem so unhappy whilst she was speaking to me?"

"She knows best, my lady; her own kin never meddles with her, nor axes her questions at them times."

"But she seemed so unhappy; I should like to speak to her again, and try to comfort her."

"No matter, my lady; don't go fur to trouble yourself about her. She be all right again now, I dare be bund."

"Do you think she would see me if I were to go again to the tents? I have already written a note to her, and sent it by one of your people this morning. But perhaps she cannot read writing."

"Yes, she can read writin', and is mighty clever beside, is Myra; and no common dudkin gal. She reads pottery books, and knows all the big names of the bushnie men, and what they palaver about. She will see the purty lady if she wants to know more about her fortune."

"I shall be very glad if she will. I return to Flamboro' Rectory to-morrow; and when I get her answer, I will go and see her."

Mister Jones now brought in the lights, and soon afterwards the wine. And then the squire entered, and Miss Violet took her departure; not, however, before she had again thanked me for the affair of the carriage, and commended me to thank big Toon also.

"Now, then," said the squire, "sit down, my good fellow, whilst I ring to inquire if your friends have arrived, ecod!"

Mr. Jones appeared in obedience to the summons, and informed us that the "gwipsies" were now in the "swervants'" hall.

"Show them in here, then," said the squire. And Mister Jones vanished to execute the order, in evident consternation.

"Come in, men, come in," cried the squire, as big Toon and Nosey stood hesitating at the door. "Your mate 's here, you see, before you. Now sit down and make yourselves at home. You shall drink with me to-night, ecod!"

"Can't do it, squire," said Nosey, "till I've eased my mind in a thing that concarns your worship to know. Is n't that it, brother Toon?"

"That 's the ticket, your worship. You sees we gypsy chaps be true to them as be's true to us; and as your worship did the clean potato to us this mornin', we 've cumed to pay back the good turn."

"What 's it all about, men, what 's it all about?" said the squire, a good deal puzzled at their behavior. "Can't you sit down when I tell you, ecod? Here Jones, fill the glasses. Dry talk 's not so good as wet speech. Drink, men, drink."

"Beg your pardon, your worship," said Nosey; "but it 's a matter o' peachment and can't be done on drink!"

"What the devil do you mean, men?" cried the squire in an angry tone. "If you 've got anything to say, you may as well say it

over a glass of good wine as not. I'll hear nothing until you are seated, ecod! that I won't!"

"As your honor pleases," said Toon, whose mouth was watering, I could see, to taste the ruddy liquor. "It's all one to us; my brother here, your worship, the prize-fighter as has been in London and knows manners, wished to show his breedin', and thought business should come afore pleasure."

"I don't want to attend to any business to-night," said the squire; "and I won't listen to anything serious. You have done me a service, and I invite you to drink with me; and d—n me if I don't have my own way. So sit down, ecod!"

My pals sat down, therefore, without more ado, although Nosey did n't half like it, and kept muttering to himself about that "rascal groom" and "peachment," for some time afterwards.

"How's this?" said the squire, raising his eyebrows in amazement, when I pushed the bottle towards him without drinking myself. "Is n't the wine good, young man, that you refuse to taste it? What's the matter with the wine, ecod man, what's the matter with it?"

"Nothing's the matter with it, squire," quoth I; "the wine's good, no doubt; but I never drinks, and hope your worship will 'scuse me."

"I'll excuse nothing of the sort. A mighty pretty thing, ecod, for a man to refuse his wine! It is n't hospitable to allow it. The hall 'ud tumble about my ears, if I did, and serve me right. Drink, man, drink!"

I stuck to my text, however, and was supported by my pals, who insisted that I never did drink, and could n't be made to. Whereupon the good squire swore a round volley of oaths, and let the subject drop.

The runaway horses caused much talk, and as the wine operated upon the squire he became quite friendly, and pledged us each and all with hearty good-will, in full bumpers. I could see that Nosey sadly wished to broach the subject of the "peachment," and he tried it on more than once; but the squire suspected his intention and choked him off. At last the subject of horse-dealing came upon the table, and the squire complained that he had lately been taken in, in his purchases, although he said his head groom was the best judge of horseflesh in the country.

"So he be, squire," said Nosey, taking up the trail; "and a pretty wide-awake chap he be, too; and knows how to butter his own bread

with his master's butter. I never know'd a bigger rascal in my born days."

"Eh? What do you say, man? Ecod! take care how you speak of my servants, and don't think because you're at my table I'll allow you to slander them. Ecod! a rascal, do you say? Now, what do you mean by that, man? What do you know about Corby, ecod!"

"More nor he'll find good for his innards, squire, I'm thinkin'; I means what I says, and if I don't prove Mister Corby a rascal — that is, me and my two pals here — then I'm no Rommany chal, and big Toon ain't my brother, and I niver licked the Frizzlin Blackie and Lankey Bob."

"Do you tell me this at my own table, man! Damme, if you don't prove it, prove every word of it as clear as claret, I'll have you put in the stocks for a week; damme if I don't! Come man, begin, begin, ecod!"

Nosey, nothing abashed nor intimidated, drank off his wine, rubbed his mouth with his coat-sleeve, stroked down his lank hair over his forehead, and then related in his own way what we had heard of the transaction between Mr. Corby and the horse-jockey that morning. The squire was at first incredulous, but as the tale proceeded and the incidents were particularized, he listened with intense interest, and with rage and indignation in all his features and gestures. Big Toon and myself corroborated it, and then the squire rose and rang the bell so violently that he broke the rope.

Mr. Jones appeared, white as a ghost, thinking no doubt that the gypsies were in the act of "cwutting" his "mastwer's throwt."

"Where's Corby?" roared the squire. "Send him here this moment!" and as Jones retired, which he did in great trepidation, the squire turned to us and said, "Mind now, good men! Mind now, do you hear? Prove this fellow a villain, ecod! Prove it, I say! Do you hear? prove it, ecod!"

"No fear o' that, your worship," said Nosey; "he shall hev it to his heart's content."

"Ay, ay! that's it!" replied the squire; "that's it, man. Only to think of it! this fellow whom I've brought up from a boy, and treated with such uniform kindness, — to rob me, ecod!"

"It's a bad go, your honor," said Toon; "and York Castle may bring him to his honesty, if he ain't dead and buried it, as my purty dog Tibby is, i' Danes' Dike, poor thin'!"

"As for York Castle, your worship," said Nosey, "mayhap that'll

be your way of endin' the business, and your honor knows best; but if you should happen to think that a leetle wholesome fibbin' on him 'ud be serviceable, I 'm your honor's man. It 'll be no sort of trouble, I do assure you."

The library door now opened, and in stepped Mr. Corby, who was not a little surprised when he beheld the gypsies, and recognized Nosey. He kept his self-possession, however, admirably; and appeared to have no suspicion of what he was wanted for.

"Did you wish to speak to me, sir?" he asked, respectfully bowing to the squire.

"Yes, Mr. Corby, ecod! I do wish to speak to you. Do you know these men?"

"I know no good of 'um, sir. They 're always poaching about your worship's grounds when they 're in these parts; and I hev heerd—"

"No matter what you have heard. I ask you, do you know these men? Have you seen them before? Have you seen them to-day?"

"Why, yes, your worship, if the truth must be told, I saw them in the horse-fair to-day; and yon big-nosed feller knocked me off the black mare and ill-treated me arterwards: and I meant to have asked your worship for a warrant for him in the morning."

"That 's me, your worship," said Nosey, rising in a rage. "I knocked him off the mare, 'cause he was insolent when I offered him a hunderd for her, and I pummelled him arter'ards because he desarved it, and would uv gived him more, as I teld him, on'y I had n't done with him; nuther hev I."

"Ecod, Corby, is that true? Did this man offer you a hundred for the mare?"

"Belike he did, sir; but where was he to get the money from?"

"And you refused to take it? Now, tell me, did any other person offer you as much as that for her?"

"Lord bless me, no, squire! I could n't get no more for her than your worship said she was to go at."

"If I put you to your oath, Corby, will you swear that is true?"

"So help me God! squire, it is quite true."

"And you will swear that?"

"I will, your worship."

"Do you remember going into a drinking booth this morning?"

"A drinking booth, squire?"

"Yes, man; a drinking booth, ecod! That 's English, ain't it?"

"O yes, squire, that 's English. No, I don't think I did go into a drinking booth this morning."

"You don't think! Then you have some doubt about it, Mister Corby. Try now and refresh your memory. It was quite natural that you should be dry such a hot day."

"Why yes, as you say, your worship, it was natural that I should want a drink; and now I remember, — O yes! to be sure I remember now quite well, — I did go into a drinking booth. How strange that I should have forgotten it."

"Did you go alone, Mister Corby?"

"Yes, squire, alone."

"Are you quite sure of that? Your memory appears to be very treacherous. Think again."

"I 'm sure I 'm right this time, squire; nobody was with me."

"Had you any conversation with any one whilst you were there? Did you meet with no friend?"

"No, your worship. I called for a glass of ale, drank it and left."

"Do you not forget yourself? Did no horse-dealer, or person dressed as such, speak to you in the booth?"

"Horse-dealer! your worship. O no! Nothing of the sort."

"Then you must be mistaken, Mister Corby, about being in the booth at all. It could n't have been you."

"Yes, I think I was in the booth, squire; at least I 'm sure I was."

"Then you must have seen the horse-dealer."

"What horse-dealer, your worship?"

"The horse-dealer you spoke to."

"Spoke to! O yes, how silly I am! I had quite forgotten it."

"Well, now you remember it, tell me what you and he talked about."

"Talked about!" said Mr. Corby, now evidently alarmed, and feeling the meshes about him; "we talked about nothing particular."

"Well, what did you talk about? What did you say to him, and what did he say to you?"

"I said, It 's a fine mornin' for the fair; and he said, Yes, it be."

"That was all?"

"Yes, your worship."

"Will you swear that nothing else passed between you? That nothing was said by either of you about purchasing the mare?"

"I really can't remember, squire. You put me out and look so angry."

"Ecod, man! never mind my looks. I want nothing but the truth from you. Was anything said about the mare?"

"I believe he asked me if I would sell her."

"And what did you say?"

"That I wanted eighty pounds for her."

"Did you ask no more than eighty pounds for her?"

"No, 'squire; and I hope you don't think I would rob your worship."

"Never mind what I think, man. Now will you swear you did n't ask him one hundred and twenty for her, ecod?"

Mr. Corby was thunderstruck at this question, and looked at each of us in turn, and then foolishly and hopelessly around the room.

"Do you hear my question, man?" said the squire, becoming greatly excited. "Did you ask one hundred and twenty for the mare?"

No answer.

"Did you receive one hundred and ten for her, and return five pounds as back money?"

Still no answer.

"Did you give a warrant with the mare, and was her price set down in it as eighty pounds?"

Still no answer.

"That will do, Mr. Corby. You see I know your tricks; and, ecod! you may depend upon it I will punish you for them."

He then rang the bell, and ordered a constable to be sent for from Burlington. Corby was taken that night to the common bridewell; and we left the hall at a late hour, the squire thanking us vociferously for the double services which we had that day rendered him.

"If you should ever get into a scrape," he said, as we parted with him at the front door, "remember where Graham Hall is. Ecod! I must be even with you chaps, justice or no justice."

CHAPTER X.

A TALK WITH IKEY ABOUT INA AND THE GOUDEN GAUDIES.

I SLEPT very soundly that night, and rose early the next morning, intending to walk over to my Burlington rooms before breakfast, to make arrangements for another visit to the Flamboro' fishermen; when I designed to call at the rectory and introduce myself to Miss Violet in my proper character. I went out of my tent, therefore, and washed myself at the brook preparatory to the journey. The weather still continued fine, and the morning as usual was very lovely. The larks were up before me, however, and their wild warbling songs seemed to rebuke me for laziness; although my conscience acquitted me on that score, for the sun himself had only risen an hour ago. When I finished my ablutions, I sat down on the great stone hard by, and lighting my pipe, listened with delighted feelings to the singing of these feathered minstrels. I am never weary of the lark's song; it is always fresh and beautiful; and at daybreak, when nature is silent, and no sound of human employment breaks upon its solemnity and repose, it seems to me most touching and an act of devotion; the first ushering notes of the day's orchestral melody. What rapture! what ecstatic delight there is in it! It is wilder and more spiritual than that of the nightingale; and the glorious little creature seems to feel what it sings, creating its own visions as it soars, and following them higher and higher, up to the very gates of heaven. No bird expresses such an intensity of delight as this favored songster. It has no melancholy notes, and, as John Paul Richter said of music, it speaks to us of things which in all our lives and imaginings we have not found, and shall not find. And whilst I sat and listened this morning on the stone by the babbling brook, the air was full of these songs, and I watched the careering of the pretty singers with unaffected delight. One of them rose just over the hedge in the adjoining field, within a few yards of me, flying low at first and uttering but few notes; and then rising and falling in gentle sweeps, he reached gradually higher and higher altitudes, until at last he soared away in nearly a direct line, and I

lost sight of him. I grew poetical over it, and improvised a poem of which the following are verses: —

Up, up, he soars to heaven away,
  The bird of lowly nest.
Hark! to his wildly gushing lay!
  The dew is on his breast.

He meets the morning in the skies,
  Upon his dappled wings.
It seems to rain down melodies
  In the glad song he sings.

Over the landscape green and brown,
  Bright, golden shadows fall;
But O! the lark's song cometh down
  More golden than them all.

He singeth yet a wilder strain
  As nearer heaven he soars;
What visions float within his brain,
  That these fresh notes he pours?

Ah! tiny bird! how deep a heart
  Within thy bosom dwells!
Would thou its meaning couldst impart,
  And what thy flight impels!

Perhaps I ought not to have transcribed these lines, for they are not over good, and the song of the bird was much better, and ought to have inspired better poetry. I do not profess to be a poet, however, and so since they are written, and would be written, they may pass for what they are worth.

Whilst I was thus occupied, I saw Ikey coming towards me from his tent, stretching his arms and yawning contagiously by the way. He was surprised to see me up so early, and could hardly believe his eyes, he said, and he began rubbing them until he was nearly blind, in order that he might see clearly.

"And what makes you turn out so early this mornin', Ikey? I have n't yet heard the cock crow down at the farm-yard yonder."

"Ikey 's dry, Master Geordie; and he comes to make friends wi' the good brook to squench his throat."

"You drank too much yesterday at the fair, I suppose, Ikey; and the copper wants coolin'."

"Yes, Master Geordie; and I don't know how I got to the tents, for I was mortal drunken."

"More 's the pity, Ikey. Why don't you leave off drinkin' beer and keep sober. I 'll warrant old Hiram did n't get drunk."

"And, indeed, you may warrant that, Master Geordie. All the beer in Burlington fair would n't squench Hiram. He 's malt proof, his belly is lined wi' hob-nails. I never seed his like. His last drink at the booth of the Cross Keys was a quart o' hot ale mixed wi' a half a pint of shortnin', — and he seed the bottom o' the pot, and no help i' the drinkin'."

"Why, the rascal, tun-barrel that he is, Ikey, he 'll be the ruin of you."

"Devil a bit, Master Geordie. Ikey means to draw in his horns. Ina says it won't do; an' she was shameful down on him 'cause he was dundered last night. Ikey means to drink water like you, Master Geordie, all the rest o' the days. And here goes for the morn."

So saying he laid himself flat down on the sward, with his mouth to the brook, and drank long and heartily.

"Good," said I, as he rose and shook himself, and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "That 's the best thing I 've seed you do for a long time, Ikey. Mind you stick to your promise."

"Never fear, Master Geordie; beer 's a good creatur', and benefittin' to the stomach and the cockles o' the heart; but Ikey knows a better thin' than that."

"What is it, cousin? Tell us what it is."

"Well, I don't mind a tellin' of you, Master Geordie; 'cause I loves you, and so does all the Rommanies. It 's Ina!"

"Ina, bolshin, what do you mean? You can't drink Ina!"

"There, now, Master Geordie! as if you did n't know what I means. You are a goin' for to be as wicked as Ina, who would n't read Ikey's riddle about the purty rifle i' the Nottingham chap's winder."

"O, O, Master Ikey! you 're there away, are you? You think Ina 'll take on with you if you give up beer, do you?"

"Perhaps she will. Ikey don't know. She 's a rum petticot, and makes me mad sometimes, till I could kill her all out, on'y I likes her so I could be scragged for her."

"And did Ina give you good abuse for your drunkenness last night, Ikey?"

"Did n't she, that 's all? You should have heerd her! I heerd nothin' else, and this mornin' can think of nothin' else."

"Well, Ikey, I 'm glad of it. I 'm goin' to Burlington to-day, and I shall bring her a spankin' pair of gold ear-rings from the jewelryman's, when I comes back."

"No don't, Master Geordie, pray don't! She 'll be so stuck up

and proud about um, Ikey 'll hev no chance to get a word from her, if you does buy her them flimsies. Leave her alone, will you, good Master Geordie?"

"Not I, cousin. You ain't worthy to have such a gal as Ina be; and she deserves to know how I esteems her for blowin' on you up for your evil ways."

"But Ikey don't mean to hev the evil ways no more, Master Geordie. He means to be as clear of um as a picked coot. Wait a day or two, an' see if he don't stick to his word. Let Ikey hev a chance to speak to his cousin, and get her to favor him agin' afore you gives her them goud thin's, Master Geordie."

"Well, I 'll think about it, Ikey. You keep your word about the beer, and who knows but I may get myself invited to your weddin' with the beautiful gypsy gal in her fine ear-rings, Ikey? Who knows?"

"Who knows, as you say, my han'some brother? And that 'ud be a grand day for Ikey and all the Rommanies! dancin' and singin' and fiddlin' — and such a drinkin' out o' the big cans! An' me and my purty Ina as happy as the leetle birds in the hedgerows. On'y on that day surelee Ikey might get drunk once more, for joy, Master Geordie. That would n't be breakin' the word, would it, brother?"

"What else would it be, Ikey, boy? To be sure it would. And I see you ain't strong enough to keep the word you speak yet. And I shall tell Ina she 's not to splice you till you are."

"You 'll do nothin' o' the sort, brother. If you does I 'll tek my darlin' rifle wi' me this minute and down to the Jolly Pirate an' get as drunk as a fool, and travel strait away from these tents to Nottinghamshire, and marry the first potter's trull's daughter who 'll say yes to my question."

"No you won't, Ikey; and I shall tell Ina what I said I would, too. You see, as you 're my cousin, and a good shot and not a bad feller at the bottom, — on'y a little wildish and very devilish when the beer 's in and the wit 's out, — I has a likin' for you, Ikey, and don't want to see you ruined, and I won't if I can help it. So try and part company wi' the drink, and you may have Ina for a wife arter all. Do you hear, Ikey?"

"Yes, I hears, Master Geordie; and you is like to hev it all your own way. I knows you loves the gypsy hellrakie; but if you meks Ina prouder nor she is, how shall Ikey hope to gain her 'fections? O Master Geordie! You don't know what I feels. Sin' I 've had my fancy on her, I've not been the same chap as I used to was. I

can't sleep o' night for thinkin' on her; and a days I'm sometimes like a witched feller; a goin' here and a stannin' still there for no reason at all, 'cept that I happens belike to remember somethin' that she's said or done to me, and that thin' meks my legs go or holds me fast to one spot till I've thought it out. When she's bin kind and smiled upon me, it seems to me as if the airth ain't the old place I've knowed these seventeen year, but better and more gooder lookin'; an the sun shines a deal brighter, and the grass looks greener, and the birds sing merrier, and the trees look a mighty deal finer, and seem as if they wanted to talk to me, and could n't; yet they do tell, though I don't know how, nor what they tell; but it seems all right, and we understands one another. Them's the happy times when I could say my prayers to her, — the dearie! the darlin' Ina! if I ever was so wicked as for to say the prayers at all, which ain't for the likes o' me to do you knows, Master Geordie, because I'se not a Christ lad, and don't belong to them as goes to church, as you does; so I niver prays on'y to the Great Name, and when Ina is good to me, and then she seems to be the Great Name, and I'se afeared that be wicked too. But them's the happy times. And when she's been a plaguin' on me, and givin' me bad words, and would n't tek the partin' kiss, them's the other times, an' I feels savage; and the airth ain't itself no more now nor it was afore, but scowls at me and looks mad; and the sun don't shine when it does shine; and the birds mocks me; and the trees won't speak to me. Then I cusses, — which, may the Lord forgive me! and I would n't meet a gamekeeper at them times in a poachin' fray, not for a sack full o' hares, worth a crown apiece, Master Geordie."

"Well, it's a long yarn, Ikey; and I don't understand what you've been a talkin' about. What lingo have you spoken in? Is it Rommany?"

"Rommany be d—d! not it. I thought it was good English — but it's no matter. Ikey knows what it means, and wishes he did n't. O Lord! when will a chap's miseries end!"

"Sooner nor you thinks, perhaps, Ikey; we shall see. Only stick to your promise, lad!"

"Ay, ay, Master Geordie! But don't bring Ina the fine gaudies to-day. Cuss on the gaudies! If the wench gits hold o' them, Ikey's goose is cooked, an there's a end o' all his happy times."

So saying, Ikey took another drink at the brook, and returned to his tent. Soon afterwards I saw him leave the encampment, with his rifle on his shoulder, taking the dike route seawards.

CHAPTER XI.

ROADSIDE MUSINGS.

WHEN he was gone I rose to depart also, and calling Satan, the devil, alias the bull-mastiff puppy-dog, to follow me, I took at once to the road. After leaving the Danes' Dike, the country is flat and uninteresting all the way to Burlington, although it is relieved a little of its dreariness by a village of some pretensions, and a few scattered cottages surrounded by trees and gardens. When I had advanced about half-way I came up to a pond by the roadside, overhung by dark willows, through the branches and openings of which the sunlight streamed in all its brightness, and I stopped awhile to consider it. I never could help such loitering, and whenever I have chanced to meet a moist little picture like this, set in a framework of green banks close to the hot and dusty road, I have always been impelled to sit down by it and enjoy its beauty and imagery, not only as a present delight, but because I knew it would come back to me again in many happy future memories. I find, indeed, an endless source of enjoyment in my every-day country rambles; and when I am well, and in good health, which is my usual condition, I envy no man his wealth nor his feelings, nor anything that is his. I pick up riches by the wayside, and am often laden like a Crœsus when the proud man passes me by as a poor, shiftless, penniless tawny. What does it matter? He has his horses; I have my own good legs. I go where I please, and am content with my lot. My pleasures are cheap and simple, such as Nature is lavish in providing for all who love her in sincerity and truth. I have two good houses in two separate towns; and, at present, a third house in Burlington, and a country residence by the Danes' Dike. I do not value the two houses a whit; they are for convenience; and one room in each serves all my purposes when I have occasion to use them. I like my greensward drawing-room under the canvas tent a thousand-fold better than those upholstery rooms of the town. Here I am free, and have no restraints put upon me; can do as I please, and read or write, shoot or fish, walk or lounge, be alone or have company, as I

please. The birds sing to me as I sit within my tent or lie luxuriously on the grass; and their song is a happy one, because they also are free, and have earth and heaven, and their own genius, to inspire them. Flowers, too, grow all around me, clustering in the hedge-bottoms, and gemming every flat and slope and hollow; whilst the pretty insects keep up a perpetual humming, and the brook hard-by goes babbling in music over the stones. Then there are the clouds, "Cloud-land, gorgeous land!" as Coleridge describes them, so wondrous in form, color, and longitude, now sailing in dark, mountainous masses through the azure deeps, and now flooded with the golden glory of the rising or setting sun, or bathed in its noonday splendor; a sight that never wearies, whose scenery is forever changing from the grand and terrible to the soft, peaceful, and beautiful, when white fleecy clouds repose in the blue air, like sunny islet lawns upon the plains of heaven. Nor is it less notable in rude, boisterous weather, when the great black clouds come rolling from the north, stretching their huge, shadowy forms over the headland, and blowing from their wild and terrible nostrils whirlwinds of hail and smoking rain. I love this fierce tumult of the elements, when Nature, aroused from the tameness of her every-day life, puts on her garment of storms, and binding the lightning upon her brow, goes forth as in the old Norse days to show us how vital she is, and how bravely she keeps up her old courtly magnificence. I think I can find all the mythologies in the transformations of Nature, — Indian, Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, Scandinavian. Each began with a rude impersonation and deification of the elements; the same common mind is burnt in fiery paintings upon them all, but modified by the national characteristics and refined by the national culture. Infancy has its Thōr and Nijord, — its worship of power and all marvellous phenomena; Youth, its Apollo, Venus, and the Muses, — its religion of form and beauty; Manhood, its Christianity and Pantheism.

With such cogitations and cheap natural pleasures as these, I am, as I said, content, and I mean to enjoy them as long as I can. It is my whim to live amongst the tawnies at certain times which are convenient to me, and I think I am not worse but better for it. I learn to love Nature more by living closer to her; and although my highly civilized and respectable friends have almost concluded to shut me out of their drawing-rooms in consequence of my wild habits, and think me a low fellow, and no better than I should be in respect to my morals, still I shall go my own way in spite of them, as I have always done thus far through life, and when I find it necessary to

accept my chart of conduct at their friendly hands, I may perhaps find it necessary to turn gypsy in real earnest and no longer to play at the game.

All this is a digression, however, and has nothing to do with the pond by the wayside, whereat I have stopped to admire. How beautiful it looked to me that morning, as I gazed into its clear waters, and how truly wonderful was the imagery I saw there. The inverted heavens were mirrored there, and the leaves and branches of the drooping willow-trees, suggesting endless possibilities of creation and existence. A brook ran from the meadow-lands above into this pond, singing a different tune to that of the pebbly minstrel by the Danes' Dike, and I began to remember and arrange in my mind all the tunes I had heard sung by the brooks and rivers of England in my rambles. They came to me clear-voiced enough in fancy, although I doubt if they would sing well were they properly mounted in notes. Just before I left the pond a blackbird burst through the willow branches, with a few gushing notes of joy, and alighting upon the margin, dipped his bright yellow bill into the water, and drank thankfully his fill. I wished I could have held a conversation with him over his morning draught; and no doubt if I had been good enough I could have done so. But I was n't, and so I contented myself with watching him, and thinking about him afterwards as I journeyed on my way. He is a rich, clear, beautiful, and bold singer, and it is pleasant to hear him in the early morning or the evening, especially after a heavy shower of rain; for I have noticed that at such times his voice is freshest and clearest. He frequents the thick hedges and copses, and builds his nest in the most retired places he can find there. He has a real liking for orchards, and contrives to make his home as near them as he can, and often in the very heart of them, surrounded by apple, plum, and pear trees, by gooseberry and currant bushes, and cherry trees. He is an epicure in fruit, and always attacks the richest and ripest, making sad havoc with the entire stock. He sings a good song, however, after he has done thieving, and everybody likes him, although the boys rob his nest of the eggs when they can find it, or take away the young ones when they are fledged to sing in cages, if they happen to survive the process by which they are fed. He is a great favorite with me, and is a thoroughly English bird, staying with us all the winter, and living on hedge fruits, hips, and haws, and on worms; and when these fail him he flies to the farm-yards, and picks up such odd fragments of grain and bread as he may find there. I have often felt sorry for

him and his brown brother with the richly speckled breast, — the beautiful throstle or thrush, — who also stays with us all the year, and whose song is not less sweet than his; sorry to think how they must suffer in the cold, hard weather, when the trees are pendulous with icicles and fretted with hoarfrost, and the fields are frozen so that iron could not plough them up, and a famine is over all the land for the poor birds. I have found both blackbirds and throstles more than half frozen in the snow at such times, and have taken them home and wrapped them in warm flannel, and fed them until they revived and recovered, keeping them in cages, more than once, until the hard weather was gone, and then some fine sunny morning in spring, when the earth was looking green and beautiful, and the trees were budding and the primroses and crocuses were blooming in my garden, I have opened the window and the door of the cage and set the glorious creatures at liberty, — thanking God who had trusted me with the care of these his darling songsters.

When Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn-Law Rhymer," — a genuine English poet, so little known in America, and so worthy to be known, — used to go to school three miles away from Rotherham, where his father lived, his daily course was by the banks of the Don, and the young poet would sit down and watch the river and listen to its singing, often till noonday, and sometimes all day long, utterly forgetful of school, lessons, and birches. And upon these occasions he made friends with a kingfisher, — a beautiful, richly, and almost tropically colored bird, — which he saw very frequently flying over these waters and the adjacent meadow lands. Fifty years afterwards, when writing his autobiography, he remembers the kingfisher flashing in those morning sunlights over the river, and speaks of it with affection as a delightful and poetic memory. And I also, his friend and biographer, shall have a long remembrance of the blackbird and the pond by the Flamboro' roadside. Elliott also loved rivers, — especially his native rivers round Sheffield, — the Don, the Sheafe, the Porter, the Rivellin; and he has written some fine musical verses to them. Here is the first verse of his song to the Rivellin: —

"Beautiful river, goldenly shining,
Where with the cistus woodbines are climbing;
Birklands around thee, mountains above thee,
Rivellin wildest! do I not love thee?
Do I not love thee, heart-breaking river, —
Love thee, and leave thee, leave thee forever!
Never to see thee, where the storms greet thee,
Never to hear thee rushing to meet me.

O, when thy poet, weary, reposes,
Coffined in slander, far from thy roses,
Tell slave and tyrant, heart-breaking river!
Tell them I love thee, love thee forever!"

It is strange enough how deeply one may get attached to natural objects, and with what facility one invests them with human attributes and yields to them affection and love. I am not surprised at this passionate burst of Elliott's to the Rivellin. It is a beautiful stream, and sings many melodies in its course, sending forth at times sweet flute-like tones, so soft and clear that one would think they were the utterances of some wild Undine, some water-spirit pouring out her soul there in all the ecstasies of love and music. And I have noticed that their tones are sweetest in the shallows of the river, where the waters flow over the stones or drop in the hollows of the rocks. I have heard, too, a sound as of silver bells, when lying on the bank, I have listened to the river gurgling under the roots of the trees; and as the bright, sparkling eddies danced in sunny laughter along the current, after kissing, as with full, ripe lips, the weeds and darnels by the river-side, I have realized the fine Greek idea, out of which the water-nymphs, with their long, streaming hair, blue eyes, and amorous mouths were fashioned, and sent floating on voluptuous bosoms down the stream. And in deeper places, where the shadows of the birches, illuminated by the sunlight, fell over the surface of the river, and the golden blossoms of the water-lily flashed ever and anon amidst the gloom, I have heard deeper voices and swellings like the sound of organs and all instruments. By day and by night whosoever hath ears to hear may hear these solos and choruses and symphonies, with many other mysterious, unspeakable things, which he shall remember in after years with joy.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BADGER IN THE SACK. — HUNT AFTER A WILD CAT.

AS I journeyed on my way I met two men not far from Graham Hall, one of whom had a sack flung over his shoulder, and both of them were armed with crab bludgeons, and were sufficiently ugly, and one of them at least right down evil-looking. I should have passed them on the opposite side of the road without any recognition or morning civilities, but the man who carried the sack hailed me in this wise: "Hello! ye gypsy chap! that 's a fine lookin' bull-dog ye hev follerin' you. Is he good for ote?"

"Ay, he be," quoth I; "he 's a right good un, I can tell you; and bad to beat any way."

"Mayhap he can feight, can he mister? He is but a young un, but he 's one o' the reight soort, I dare be bun."

"O yes, he can fight; but I ain't in that business, and don't mean to begin to foller it."

"Well, it ain't a varry respectable line, that 's a fact! But I thote ye gypsies was n't particlar, and I knows ye likes a bit feight yoursens sometimes."

"That all depends on the 'casion, and whether we thinks we 've been put on, and the chap desarves a lickin'."

"Did the pup ever see a badger, mister?" asked the companion of the sackman, coming close up to me; a liberty which Satan did n't at all approve of, for he gave a low growl, and began to lick his chops with rapidity, as his custom was when he was ready for mischief. So I told the man he had better go farther off, as I could n't answer for the dog, adding that he had never seen the animal alluded to.

"Would you like him to hev a go at one, mister?" he replied, retreating softly as he spoke. "My mate's got one i' the poke, and it ain't every dog as can draw him."

"No," I replied; "I don't want to try him at that sport. I knows his mettle well enough, without that."

"Ay, maester," said the sackman; "belike you does. And he

may be a good dog, and yet not mettlesome enough to draw a badger."

"I tell you, man, I don't want him to try; I knows him better nor you; and if the Devil was in the poke, and I was to tell him to, he 'd precious quick draw him out, horns an' all."

"Damme, if I believes it!" said the other fellow, as impudently as you like; staring me full in the face, at the same time, and snapping his fingers defiantly.

"Believe it or not, my fine chap!" said I, "it 's all one to me. And I 'd advise you to go to dame school agin, and pay an extra tuppence a-week to larn manners."

"What 's that you say, and be d—d to you!" he cried, fiercely, advancing a step towards me as he spoke, and gripping his crabstick as if he meant to use it.

"I said what you heerd, bully! And I hope you 'll improve upon it. Maybe it 'll be better for your bones. Tain't everybody as is as good-natured as I be. I 've seed a feller licked to his heart's content, for the matter of half your sauce, many a time afore today."

"Harkee, Bill!" he said, speaking to his mate. "Harkee at him! Shall I take the shine out on him, Bill? It ud do him good. Shall I at him again, Bill?"

"Noa!" said Bill; "let the cove be. Ye 're alus fur fightin' and tewin' when there 's no need on it. If the tawny don't want fur to try his dog, there 's an end on 't; though I sud loik to see the fun, I mun confess."

"Well," I replied; "you 've heerd me say as how I don't want to try him. And as fur your pal there, if he thinks to bully me into it, why he 's mistain. And as for his takin' the shine out o' me, I tell him t' his face, that it ud take a better chap nor him to do it, a long way. So I wish you good mornin'."

With that I made a movement to be off, but there stood the bully right in my path; swearing what he would do to me, and evidently resolved to oppose my progress. So I went up to him, and told him to get out of the way, as I had loitered long enough. Whereupon he lifted his stick and aimed a blow at my head which I caught with my right hand, and then suddenly springing out a step, I struck him with my left fist under the jaw, and sent him sprawling in the road. Satan made a spring at him the moment he fell; but I luckily caught him by the collar before he had time to reach him, and so I held him until the man with the poke picked his mate up.

"A fair knockdown blow, lad," said he; "and though the chap be my mate, he desarves what he 's got. By gom! thou 'se a plucky chap, and I sud loik to treat thee to a quart."

"Your mate's quite welcome to his whackins, master, and as much more as he likes to ask for; and as you seems to be jonick yoursen, — altho' you 've got into sich bad company, — I 'm obligated to ye for your offer of the quart of beer by way of civility; an' if iver we meets agin, — and there 's a public near by, — we 'll wet our whistles together." So I again said, "Good morning," and departed, this time, without molestation; although my bully boy scowled sullenly and maliciously upon me as I passed under his lee side.

I was a good deal vexed at this petty episode by the way; not that I was at all sorry for the part I had been forced to take in it, — for I hold, with Lord Chesterfield, who is a patrician authority in matters of politeness and honor, that it is my duty to knock any man down if he "designedly intends to insult or affront" me; and I do not believe in offering my left cheek to the blackguard who smites me on the right. It is bad moral philosophy, and worse pugilism; although it is good enough doctrine for "peace societies," and unmanly preachers, and generally for all barnyard fowl and dunghill cowards. I dislike fighting, however, for its own sake, as much as any man living; although I respect the science and commend its practice on legitimate occasions. It would be a long way better for all manly virtues and exercises if there were more "Flaming Noseys" in the world, who believe in hard hitting with naked fists, as the final settlement of quarrels, instead of Bowie-knives and revolvers. A fair stand-up fight, in the old-fashioned way; a clear ring, and no favor! that is my notion of such things, if there is to be fighting at all. And I should like to know what ails it in point of morality? I would rather use this method than follow the example of any Moses, ancient or modern, and slay my Egyptian right out with a foreign and unnatural weapon. You don't want to kill a man who offends and injures you, — unless you have more of the Devil in you than I have at least, or desire to have, — but to chastise him, and teach him better manners. And depend upon it, there 's nothing like a good pummelling for this. It is a low, animal practice say the dainty humanitarians and philanthropic Israelites who live upon water-gruel and wind, and swear by the great names of Cobden, Bright, Joseph Sturge & Co.; but then you have low, animal people to deal with, who have no faith in water-gruel and the milk of human kindness and "higher principles," and can understand no argument which is

not striking enough to break their heads. This humanity-mongering is a base Carthaginian thing, — alien and evil both in blood and lineage, — and may yet involve the world in another Punic war. I it should, I hope to live to see every Carthaginian hanged; and I will undertake to find the functionary who shall do the business gladly and handsomely for them, without the usual fee; nay, who would willingly pay for the pleasure of hanging the traitors up.

Still I was annoyed that my innocent and agreeable morning pleasure and meditations had been so disagreeably invaded and dispersed. What right had these scamps to molest me, and praise my bulldog, and want me to set him on to worry the poor badger in the poke? Clearly none at all. I hate badger-baiting and cock-fighting and bull-baiting. I have witnessed them all in my time, and nothing could tempt me to go after them again. They are essentially cruel and brutal sports, and arouse the worst passions of human nature, brutalizing every beholder of and participator in them. I know the time was when they were not only common but fashionable in England, and many fair ladies, who in their own homes would not hurt a "harmless fly," have sat for hours to see a bull-baiting, and enjoyed the sport with as keen a relish, through all the phases of its bloody barbarity, as the ruffianly crew who conducted the combat. No doubt it is exciting enough, and as a lady once told me, who had been present at Spanish bull-fights, the first sight of blood on these occasions begets a ferocity in the spectator which is perfectly demoniacal, and the death of man or beast — no matter which — can alone satisfy it. Things are mending a little, however, one is glad to say, in England, in respect to its cruel sports; which, indeed, are all illegal now. I could find an apology, if necessary, for their use in olden times; for people had nothing better to do to fill up their leisure hours and holidays; and these sports were a true expression of the national character. The English are a plucky people, and like fighting, and admire pluck both in man and animals, and the best way even now to get at an Englishman's heart is to prove yourself a better man than he is, — or as good a one, — if you have occasion to quarrel with him. When Spring fought his great battle with Neat, he more than once praised the science of his antagonist, even in the midst of the fight; and when the battle was ended Neat went up to him and shook him generously by the hand, acknowledging himself beaten, and declaring that he had fought the last few rounds with one of his arms broken. A people who have no mercy on themselves, — who take a two hours' hammering as merrily as they take their

dinner, — are not likely to be fastidious about fighting their dogs and bulls and cocks. At one time, indeed, sports of all kinds, and these amongst the rest, were ordained by law; and some towns held charters and common rights on the express condition that there should be a bull-baiting twice a year in the parish. This was the case at Stamford in Lincolnshire, where, as a boy, I saw my first and only sight of this description.

I am getting too talkative, however, and forgetting what I set out to do in this chapter. So as it is time that I arrived at my rooms in "Sea-Drift Cottage," suppose, good reader, that we go there at once. It is only about a stone's throw from yonder railway arch, which spans the road, and I can see, even at this distance, the oriel window which lights my sitting-room on the first floor. Here then we are at last. The little gate is open, and I enter the yard in wonder, and hurry up to my landlord who is still in his shirt-sleeves, and has just banged to his shop-door, in great excitement, whilst his jolly fat wife stands close to him with the kitchen-poker in her hand.

"What is it all about, good people? what is the matter?" I exclaimed, as soon as I got within hearing distance.

"Lord a mercy on us! if here ain't Mister George!" said the good dame, raising her eyes in astonishment at my sudden apparition. "Deary me, there 's matter enough I assure you, and I 'm glad you 've comed. The master's got a wild cat i' the shop. We seed him just now; sich a big un! wi' great starin' eyes as green as glass, and as red and flarin' as a coal fire."

"Well," said the landlord quietly, "you need n't mek' sich a fuss about it, missus. It 's no' but a big he cat, sir, as is gone wild, and cums prowlin' about my shop arter the bird-skins. I 've got him safe now, and I 'll tek' care he don't mek away wi' any more on um. He 's spiled the best of a dozen, that gentle-folks has left here for me to stuff; and he 'll hev' to dee for 't, though I expects we shall hev' some trouble afore we catches him."

"No matter," said I, "here 's a dog that 'll do his business, and be glad of the fun; won't you, old fellow?"

Whereupon Satan licked his chops and wagged his tail, and sprang upon me lovingly, with his forepaws.

"Lord bless me! Mister George," said the dame; "where did you get that ugly beast from? Is he yourn?"

"Yes, Mrs. Jones, he 's mine; and you 'd better not call him ugly to his face. He 's a touchy chap, and as jealous of his good looks as any female woman in these parts."

"Is he?" said she coaxingly, and looking down as innocent as a young gosling upon the sturdy bulldog.

"Is he, poor thing? well, it's quite nateral in the critter. Poor dog! what do you call him, Mister George?"

"Devil! Mrs. Jones, at your service."

"Devil! O Lord, what a name! But you're a-jokin', ain't you, sir?"

"Not a bit of it; that's his name, and that's his nature, Mrs. Jones, as you will perhaps see before long."

"Shall we turn him into the shop, Mister George?" asked the landlord; and then, as Satan put his nose under the door and began snuffing and tearing it with his teeth, "Marcy on me!" he added, "what a beauty he be! Shall we turn him in, sir?"

"With all my heart, Mr. Jones, and if you'll hand me that hedge-stake there, I'll go in along with him. Will you join me?"

"To be sure I will, sir. Here, missus! do you stan' here and keep the door fast"; and with these preparations we entered the shop.

All was dark as pitch; for the shop, so called, had been originally intended for a coach-house, and there were no windows in it, Mr. Jones always working with the doors wide open, when he had light enough.

In an instant we heard Satan rattling amongst the old barrels and shop rubbish, upsetting hampers and boxes, and cutting sundry other capers in his excitement after the wild cat. Then there was a pause in his movements, and then a bound and a crash, and a terrific scuffle, in the midst of which burst the unmistakable whowing of the cat, and its sudden, startling, and yet comical fizzing — fitz — fiz! whow-oo-oo-oo-whow! by which we knew that Tom had been rooted out of his quarters, and was squatted somewhere in perfect safety for the present.

"Can't you strike a light, Mr. Jones?" asked I. "The dog can't see the whiskered he-devil."

"I'm feelin' for the match-box all the time, Mister George. O, here it is at last, now then for the illumination."

And with that he struck a light, and lit a double-wicked tallow candle, which blazed away like a torch, and showed us the actors and the scenery. There, on a beam end, which projected about a foot from the side wall, at the other end of the shop, the big black cat was perched; not in any menacing attitude, however, but comfortably and at his ease, with his fore paws tucked under him, as if he were just going to take a cosey nap by the parlor fire. There was no mistak-

ing his eyes, however, which glared with the spirit of fight and fury, as he watched Satan's movements below, which were anything but quiet and dignified; for he was baffled and exasperated, and now stood barking like a fool at the imperturbable cat, and now springing upon whatever object was near him, in the hope of grabbing or dislodging his feline enemy. It was all in vain, however, nor was Thomas at all inclined to move when we approached him with the light.

"Darn him!" said Jones, holding the candle within a few feet of him, so that the light fell full upon his burly black cheeks, "he 's a cool un, that he is! Try what the stick ul do for him, sir. Fetch him over!"

So I flung the stick at him, which catching him on the broadside sent him over with a whirl, and as Satan was just under him, I thought it was all up with the poor brute. But nothing of the sort. He hung for a moment by his forepaws, whowing and screaming most musically, and then with the rapidity of lightning he recovered his position, — standing this time on all fours, — his back bent, his mane bristling, and his tail, each particular hair of which stood clear on end, flashing backwards and forwards furiously. And then his eyes! those great, green saucer eyes, whose phosphorescent depths seemed to be lighted up by a perfectly tiger fierceness; how they rolled and glared in their sockets! His dander was up; and he clearly meant to show us that he was no common grimalkin, nor a beast to be played with.

"Do but look at him, Mr. Jones," said I. "Did you ever see such a Tartar? He 'll give battle to us all if he 's pushed to extremities, I 'd lay my life on 't. Have a care and don't go too near him. His claws are dangerous."

"Od rot him," said Jones, picking up the hedge-stake, and advancing within a yard of him. I 'll fix him anyhow." And with that he delivered a blow, which, if it had hit the mark, would have ended the brute; but it fell short and struck the beam only; and Jones, in his excitement, stumbled a foot forward. In an instant the cat sprang upon his back, holding on by his claws, and fizzing horribly in Mr. Jones's ears, whilst he bellowed for help at the top of his voice. It was a most ludicrous sight, although anything but a pleasant one for him; for how to get the cat off I did n't know. To strike at him would be to endanger Mr. Jones, and as for risking my naked hands against his well-armed paws, I knew a trick worth two of it. Poor Jones was really frightened; and it suddenly occurred to me to tell

him to lie down, which he no sooner began to do than Tom, not liking the near neighborhood and frantic actions of Satan, who, by this time, had made several attempts to get up Mr. Jones's back after him, jumped off at a flying leap, and bolted up a ladder which led to a loft in the roof. Here we followed him, and after hunting about for some time, Satan found him in an old hamper and made short work of him. We dragged him into the daylight, and he was truly a fine fellow of his breed, and had the most glossy and beautiful skin I ever saw.

"He 's dead, then, is he?" said Mrs. Jones, as we came out of the shop; "poor beast! he war a pretty cat, varry! It war a'most a pity to kill him."

"Don't let 's hev any i' your soft, missus," said Jones. "He 's dead, and I mean to skin him and stuff him, and put him in a cage for the gentlefolks to look at. Get ye into the house, missus. Mister George wants his breakfast I dare be bund."

The dame's kettle was already boiling on a good coal fire, and I was not sorry to break my fast after my morning's walk and adventures.

"Are there any letters for me, Mrs. Jones?" I asked, as she poured out the coffee.

"Yes, Mister George, there be. A whole hatful."

"Please let me have them, then." So the good dame fetched the letters and I began to read them. Having dug down through various more or less interesting strata, I arrived at a most primordial-looking phenomenon of the foolscap size, the address written in large, rude characters, as if some megatherium had walked over it with muddy feet wet from his habitat of bogs. It bore the Flamboro' post-mark, and when I saw that, I was no longer surprised at its barbarity. So I opened it and read as follows:

FLEMBURROW, THIS MUNDAY NEET.

SUR, — Bill Gibbuns hes teld me as how yow whant to larn the Fisshermun chaps to reed and rite, and count, and mek um all scollards; an he ses yew will send um a box of bucks for 't reed, and put um in 't way o gittin news ivery day by 't poast as brins t' parson's latters. An as I 'm t' scule-maester, they wishes me for 't say that they 'l be glad to meat you, as you propposed, in t' scule rooam o' Fryday neet next as is cummin at seven o 't clock, an I tek t' libbertee t' say as I sall un all. So no more at present fra Sur,

Yourn unwurthee

JOHN SNORRA.

"Very good, John Snorra!" said I, as I laid the letter on the table. "I shall certainly come, John Snorra; and much good may my visit do you." To-day, however, was Thursday, and so I should have to alter my plans a little. I determined therefore, that after I had answered my letters, I would take a proper suit of rigging with me back to the encampment, and go from thence to Flamboro' in the evening, and sleep that night at the inn. So after I had finished breakfast, I went into the stable and fondled my horse, promising him a merry journey before long, and telling him to make his days as happy as he could, and not to forget his master who loved him. To all which the intelligent creature replied by rubbing his head and face against mine, as I stood with my arms around his neck, and whinnying after me affectionately as I left the stable. I then despatched my business letters, and took them to the post myself, calling at the jewelry man's for the "gaudies" I meant to bestow upon Ina, and at the gunsmith's for some powder and shot for Ikey. And thus my errands ended, I returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XIII.

INA AND THE EAR-RINGS.

I DEPOSITED the bundle of clothes I had brought with me from Burlington in my tent, and then went and sat outside in the sunshine, to adjust some of my "curiosities" on cardboards, for a young nobleman with whom I had long been on terms of intimacy and correspondence, and from whom I had that morning received a letter requesting me to send him some for his private cabinet. He was as much interested as myself in these antique remains of the aborigines, and was preparing a paper upon them to be read before the next meeting of the British Association. Whilst I was thus occupied, the tawny brats kept up a perpetual clamor on the green, and my big brothers and sisters were either lounging on the grass or mending chair-bottoms, or making nets, or romping over one another in wild horse-play. Big Toon and Granny Mabel sat apart, near the camp-fire, talking seriously, and paying no regard to what was going on around them. Once or twice I saw them look towards me, and at such times old Granny whispered earnestly to Toon, who shook his head as if he did not approve of her suggestions. These movements set me a thinking, and I began to suspect that their discourse related in some way or other to Myra as well as to myself. What had become of Myra? Why was she not on the green with the rest of the family? Was she ill? These and a thousand other questions started one after the other in my mind, to none of which was there any one to give me an answer. I began to be weary and unhappy; for although yesterday the incidents of the fair, and to-day those of my walk to the town had prevented me from thinking very much upon my sweet sister, yet assuredly I had not forgotten her! I remembered her passion and agony in our last interview, and the scene also with Miss Violet, too well ever to forget them. And now I pondered over them afresh, and wondered what had become of her, and why she did not visit me this morning as usual. She must know that I was in camp; every one knew, although at present I had received no recognition or salutation. It was the habit of the gypsies

to be thus taciturn on occasions, and I was not surprised at it. But Myra was always there to welcome me, and seemed instinctively to know my outgoings and incomings. Why, then, was she now absent? Was she overtaken by any maidenly modesties, and ashamed of her late confession and demonstrations of love? This could not be. She was too strong, too self-reliant, too noble for such weakness. What then could be the matter? Alas! I knew not; and there was nothing for it but patience and time.

In this perplexity and uncertainty a visitor came to me at last from the tents. It was Ina, as fresh as a rose and as gay as a lark. Her hair had been well combed and brushed, and instead of the braids and fillet of yesterday, she had arranged it in long floating curls. She was otherwise in complete undress, her gown open in front down to the waist, half revealing, half hiding a bosom of exquisite beauty. She sat down opposite to me, after the usual civilities had passed between us, and wondered "what I could see in them old flints to take such pains to make 'um look purty."

"If they looked half as purty, Ina, as you do this morning, I think everybody but an evil old maid would excuse me if I fell in love with 'um," said I.

"Don't talk, Master Geordie! You knows as how you loves them old stones better nor any flesh and blood gal as ever was. I would n't be your wife if there war n't no more men breed alive. You thinks too much o' them unfeelin' flints for my money."

"I never asked you to be my wife, Ina, and it 'll be time to refuse me when I do."

"Well, though I says it as should n't, you might hev a worser wife than me, Master Geordie, though you do talk so high and mighty at the present time," said she, tossing her splendid head, which shone like gold in the sunlight.

"No doubt of it, Ina, and a better one, too."

"Better me no better, Master Geordie! I 'm as good as any bushnie gal what lives your way, though I ain't larned to read bucks and do the briddery (broidery) fads."

"I know you 're a purty gal, Ina, and I never seed finer eyes and hair, and such glowing cheeks and red lips and sparkling white teeth afore; and I don't know a gal as 'ud make a better wife, though there may be such in some hole and corner of the island for all that."

"That 's the way to say it, Master Geordie; and you 've got my good opinion again. But I don't like you when you shies at me i' that fashion. It ain't the right thing for a man to do to a maid."

"Then I beg your pardon, Miss Ina, and I won't offend your purty maidenship no more."

"But you will if you calls me Miss Ina; for that ain't friendly atween brother and sister, an' you does it a purpose. I is n't a miss. Its ony fine ladies as is misses. I 'm plain Ina Toon, Master Geordie, and I won't hold any more talk along wi' you if you calls me that name agin."

"Well, then, my beautiful Ina; my nightingale of the tamboreen!"

"Hist! bosh! Ha done wi' that nonsensical rigmaroldy, will you, I say? Or s' help me God, I 'll throw a stone at you!"

"Throw away, dearie! What ever you does becomes you right well. You looks real handsome when you 're in a passion. Let me draw your likeness, my darling panther cub."

"Master Geordie! don't you go for to plague me too far. I shud be sorry for to hurt you, and I know one as 'ud niver forgive me if I did. But a body ain't made o' dirt or ditch-water. You will please to remember that, Master Geordie."

"I 'm glad to find you 're so plucky, Ina. But you 'll get your match I 'm a thinking, when you get Ikey."

"Get my match, shall I? Perhaps I shall, as you are pleased to say, when I gets Ikey."

"Of course you will. When folks wed they make a match of it, don't they? If you wed Ikey, he 'll be your match and you 'll be his 'n, and a precious blaze there 'll be atween you, specially when he gets drunken."

"But he 's not agoin' to get drunken no more, now then, for you! He told me so himsen, not above a hour gone by. An' I 'm glad on it. I hates him when he 's i' beer. I wishes there was no beer. He 's a good favored lad sufficient when he 's sober, an' can dance an' shout an' sing a Rommany song better nor any on 'um. But his enemy is that unabidable beer. An' I 've told him I 've a made up my mind not to keep his company — that is, not to — to —"

"Have him for a match, I suppose you means, good sister Ina. Well, that 's right; and I hope you 'll stick to what you say and make him stick to his promise. I 've heerd something of this afore. A little bird came and whispered it in my ear as I was a washing of myself in the brook this morning, and to mark my approbation of my beautiful sister Ina's conduct and good intentions, I said to myself, said I, 'What 's to hinder you, Master Geordie, from buying the purty maiden Ina, of the beautiful brown eyes and hair, and the

rosy cheeks and lips, a present of golden ear-rings at the jewellery man's, when you're at Burlington town to-day on your own business?' And so, answered myself, said I, 'Surely nothing at all; for the dearie is worthy to wear 'um.' And here, my sweet sister Ina, — my good, sweet sister Ina, — that's so full of pluck, and ready to stone a chap in God's name, here are the gaudies."

I took them from my waistcoat pocket as I said these words, and held them before me at arm's length. She eyed them with much delight, and evidently longed to have them, but she sat quite still where she was, and did not offer to take them. She spoke, however:

"Is it gammon, Master Geordie? Is them purty gowden fads for me?"

"To be sure they are, Ina. I bought them for you to wear, because I thinks you deserve them for wishing to make Ikey keep away from the belly-vengeance stuff."

"Then you're uncommon good, Master Geordie, and a chap arter my own heart; an' I'm sorry I said I'd throw the stone at you: an' I shud like to come over to your side an' kiss your lips, an' mek' it all up — on 'y I'se affeared you would think it was for the sake of the gowden fads as I kissed you, an' not because I'm sorry that I've gone for to say bad words to a young man as is so kind to me."

"I sha'n't think it's done for the sake o' the fads, Ina, dearie; I've a better opinion of myself and of you too. So come and do as you wish, sister, and I'll forgive you, and thank you, and then do the same for you."

"That's kind of you, Master Geordie," said she, rising with grace and pleasure in every motion. Then kneeling down beside me, she put her arms round my neck and kissed my lips as she said she would, and I returned the same with interest.

"Very purty sport, Master Geordie," said Ikey, who had come so silently and suddenly upon us that we did not see him until he spoke, and then turning maliciously to Ina, he added, "Ikey hopes his cousin likes the bushnie's kisses."

"Very much indeed, I thanks you, cousin Ikey, better nor blackberries."

"Then I wishes the next you gets may choke you," he cried, grinding his teeth, whilst his black eyes glared with jealous rage.

"That's very good of you, no doubt," replied the maiden, saucily, but coloring deeply at the same time; "but I is n't agoin' for to choke along wi' the likes o' a' ill-mannered fool as you be."

"Be quiet, Ina," said I; "your cousin Ikey is vexed at present,

and I dare say he thinks he has reason to be so. Tell him now how it all happened."

"Not I, indeed! what be 's it to him, I wants to know, if I likes to buss you, or you to buss me, Master Geordie? Is there ony law agin it? who bought and seld me, that I 'm not to do as I likes? I cums o' the Toon tribe, and is a free Rommany gal, Master Geordie; an' I ain't a goin' for to nuckle under to the chap as wants the kisses to choke his cousin. Tain't i' the book, an' I sha'n't do it."

"That 's proud and wilful of you, Ina," I said; "your cousin ought to have it all explained to him, cause he 's going to be your match, you knows, and loves you, and if you won't tell him all about it I will."

So I related the facts as they happened, and showed Ikey the earrings in token of my good faith in the matter.

"O, the cursed gaudies!" he exclaimed, as they glittered before him. "Ikey's a gone coon ever arter this. Why did you bring her the artful things, Master Geordie? The kissin' was bad enough, but them fads bangs all. Don't gi'e 'um to her, pray don't, Master Geordie! They 'll turn her head clean round, an' the gal 'll go daft."

"If I was a man now, you louty blackguard," said Ina, "I 'd jist do your dressins for you, Ikey! I 'd teach you to abuse the good thins o' God that 'er way, and call your cousin scranny. An' gal as I be, if you does n't hold your fool's tongue I 'll hit you i' the mouth."

"I wish Nosey could hear you say so, my tiny bantling! He 'd back you I warrant me. However, here 's the trinkets, Ina, and I hope you 'll live many long years to wear 'um, and always be as purty as you are now, and a little meeker in the spirit, — altho' I loves to see pluck even in a cock-sparrow. So take 'um, Ina; and wait here awhile till I go into my tent, and asks the fairy which I keeps there in a magic bottle, whether she ain't got a gift for Ikey, too."

When I returned I produced the powder and shot, which Ikey seized eagerly, and stowed away in his shooting-coat pockets; for he always wore a coat of that description.

"Won't you make up your quarrel?" said I, "now that the fairy has provided for you both."

"Ikey's willin'," said that person. "You does n't bear no malice, does you, cousin Ina?"

"Perhaps I don't and perhaps I does. You ain't a goin' for to cum the old sodger over me that way, Ikey, don't think it. I knows

better, an' I means to tek time to consider whether I shall malice you, or whether I sha'n't. So good day, Master Geordie, and many thanks to you. Would you like another kiss afore I go? I've got plenty on 'um left, an' your welcome to 'um all as flowers is i' May."

"Not this time, you wicked gal. O Ikey! what plagues these she-males be!" said I, as the laughing, taunting beauty floated over the green to her tent.

"Plagues! Master Geordie," replied Ikey, who all this time had been fingering his powder and shot, and now pulled out both packages and turned them admiringly over and over in his hands. "Plagues! I believes they be! But Ikey knows how to spend a pleasant hour by hissen, now that Master Geordie's fairy has forked out the powder an' shot. Ikey means to shoot away the plagues all down by the seaside, an' sing, O! He 's alus happy wi' his rifle down by the seaside." And away he went.

CHAPTER XIV.

FLAMING NOSEY AND THE RING.

WHEN I had finished my assortment on the cards, I placed them carefully in my trunk, and then laid down on my bed alongside Satan, who was already comfortable in those quarters. I needed rest, and slept soundly for two hours, when I was awoke by big Toon, who came to call me to supper.

"Brother," said I, "I have n't seen my sister Myra, to-day. What ails her? I think she 'd have been to my tent afore now if she 'd been well; and yet I hope she 's not sick."

"She is sick, brother; an' has n't riz from her bed these two days past, next sundown."

"That 's bad news, brother. Why did n't some of you come and tell me afore now?"

"She would n't let us. She axed arter you at noon; and when she knowed you was at home, she told Granny Mabel to ax you to cum to her when the moon was up; an' lay on her the Healin' Hand."

"What 's that, brother?"

"Hev you niver heerd o' the Healin' Hand, Master Geordie? You what is so knowin' and larned in thin's!"

"No, brother. What does it mean?"

"Why, I thote you know'd all about it. It's as old as Egypt land; an' the swarthy chaps has had the secret iver sin' they've been a wanderin' up and down the arth. Many 's the cure I've seed made wi' the Healin' Hand."

"I don't understand you, big Toon; and I wish you 'd do me the favor to speak so that I can. I 'm a bad riddle reader, and likes plain talk, such as a wayfaring man, though a fool, can make good sense of."

"There 's no riddle in it, Master Geordie. It 's all as plain as a guide-post at cross-roads, when the blessed moon is a shinin' on it. There 's a power o' healin' i' the hand o' a man, Master Geordie, when the heavenly bodies is favorable. But the vartu belongs to the stars an' the Great Name."

"Rubbish! big Toon. Don't think to gammon a larned chap like me with such wild stuff as that."

"Don't abuse the gift, young man, what comes from the Great Name," said he, with solemnity. "There's no gammon in it, I assures you for your larned satisfaction; but it's a real thin', as you will find out when you goes to try your luck at the risin' o' the moon."

I could see that big Toon was half offended with me for my scepticism, which implied, in his mind, a want of reverence also for God, whom he and his called the "Great Name." For I have always found the gypsies very religious in their way, although perfectly free from the disease which is so well known amongst us moderns by the name of cant. Their Eastern progenitors, indeed, who, in India, spoke the wonderful Sanscrit language, and founded a literature, philosophy, and religion on the banks of the Ganges many centuries before the pyramids were built in Egypt, were so profoundly penetrated by the mystery and splendor of the Divine Being, and by the reverence due to his attributes, that the dread name of "OM," by which he is designated in their sacred books, was never verbally uttered, as being too holy and immaculate for human lips to articulate. I could n't help Toon's anger, however, although I had no intention of exciting it. For I really did not know at that time what he meant by the Healing Hand. I had heard of charms, incantations, and the power of the seventh child of a seventh child to heal by touch; and I had also read in history of some of our kings touching their subjects on great state occasions, in order to cure them of the "king's evil." I had read also of animal magnetism and its marvels, and of Mesmer and his doings upon the theatre of the first French Revolution. The power of fascination, too, and the dreadful "Evil Eye," glaring through all Eastern history and romance, as a thing of accredited potency and influence, were familiar to my mind; although, with the exception of this last-named agency, I had never troubled myself with much consideration, nor attempted any philosophical solution of them. It never struck me that they might be the *disjecta membra* of one grand, dark, mysterious system of agencies whose laws were discoverable by the human intellect, and capable of being wielded for beneficent purposes. What is now understood by mesmerism, electro-biology, clairvoyance, and spiritualism, was altogether unknown at that time, or, if known, confined to a very limited circle; and scarcely a rumor of it had reached my ears. It is not to be wondered at, then, that I did not understand what big Toon meant; nor did he condescend to instruct me, nor I to ask him for further expla-

nation, although I sat by his side in the tea, or rather supper circle, where most of the grown-up members of the family were also assembled.

Granny Mabel brewed some good tea that evening, and was more than commonly attentive to me, although not a word was said about Myra by her or any of the company. The only talk of interest related to Brother Nosey, who had announced his intention of returning to London in a couple of days, to meet his friends, who were going to back him for five hundred pounds and the belt of England. I was sorry he was going to leave us, for I liked him well. He was a genuine fellow, and as a class, all prize-fighters are so. Their profession, indeed, is a sort of guaranty in itself for the manliness, bravery, and generosity of those who follow it. It is the only order of chivalry which trade and commerce and the "march of mind" have left us. Indifferent good men do, doubtless, get admitted into the magic "ring" sometimes, who can be bought and sold like sheep at a cattle-fair; but they are never esteemed, no matter how scientific, fortunate, or good-bottomed they may be. For the "ring" has its code of honor, as well as the "Carlton Club," or any other association of gentlemen, and blacklegs are not respected there.

Nosey was a fair representative of his order, in all that related to its manly qualities. There were more literate men than he in the "profession," and also more presentable men, — Jem Ward, to wit, — but there was no one more brave or honest. He was what is technically called a "reliable man," who goes to the scratch to win if he is able! He could neither be bribed, tempted, nor bullied into selling a battle. He was proud of his vocation, and laudably ambitious of distinction in it, — just as a right-minded soldier is ambitious of distinction in war. As good qualities go to make a prize-fighter as a warrior. And why not? The warrior is but a prize-fighter on a grander platform, with more imposing pomp, circumstance, and accessories of battle, and with a larger stake at issue. *Fiat justitia!* Let justice be done to high and low, rich and poor; and let us call a pot by its right name.

It is proper for me to render this justice to the science of fists, because Nosey was my particular friend and chum, — and because whilst I go in for fair play to him and his profession, I am no partisan of the "ring," but a mere observer and reporter of life as I have found it amongst those of its members who have come in my way from time to time. Plato was a good boxer; and I confess to have in my heart that love for boxing, wrestling, quarterstaff, and the rest,

which my good old English forbears had; which made such grand battle men of them in the field, or in front of the old wooden bulwarks on the brine; which made them so generous and hospitable at home, such good fathers, neighbors, and citizens, — and to do so many good deeds. I hold that man to be patriotic, and worthy of Heaven's special benediction, who helps by word or example to restore these olden usages, which were once the gymnastics of the nation, and the preparatory discipline for war, offensive or defensive. A nation of shopkeepers is not a very sublime spectacle for God or man to behold, — and that is what the English have now become. A nation of shopkeepers, whom the peace society would rob of their livers, that they might lack gall to make oppression bitter, — and come in the end to say to the Russian Cossacks: "Beat us with stripes! take from us our liberties! — do with us as seemeth you good, most virtuous savages! — but buy our penny whistles and our thingumbobs, for the love of God, and the bellies that is within us!" Anything would be better than that, my friend John Bull, I think. Even a whole nation of boxers, trained to the gloves, as I, indeed, would have them to be, from the age of six years to sixteen. No fear then of pigeon livers, or peace societies, or humanity-mongers, — the national health would be too vigorous, too full of blood, for such diseases as these to flourish in its system.

My friend Nosey was n't affected by any disease of this sort; but was full of health and strength, and had good notions in him of what was right and honest, — quite as good as his betters in what is called the "social scale." And I attribute much of this to his sound body and the reality of his life. *Mens sana in corpore sano* is an old sentence, and the mind and the body are related, like cause and effect. A good conscience never grew up in a dyspeptic person. A bad stomach is irreligious, and believes in infant damnation, and mixes sand with sugar, and sells roasted beans for coffee, and puts plaster of Paris into the flour. Commend me to gypsy life and hard living. Robust exercise, out-door life, and pleasant companions are sure to beget good dispositions both of mind and body, and would create a stomach under the very ribs of death, capable of digesting a bar of pig-iron.

As I sat at tea this evening, I could not help admiring the fine fellow, and felt myself drawn to him by unwonted affection. I don't like parting with friends at any time. If I let you go who have sat with me, ate with me, laughed and talked with me, and rendered me so many good offices for so long a time, I feel that more than half

myself will go with you, and that I shall be disconsolate at my loss. And so I felt with respect to Nosey. I liked him and big Toon, and all their manly brothers and relatives; and it seemed to me that I could n't spare any of them, much less the prize-fighter. So as we rose from the camp-fire, and took a turn down the lane, I said to him:

"I tell you what, brother, it grieves me to part with you, and the thought on 't is very disagreeable to my feelings. My case is a good deal like that of a country wench whose sweetheart 's a going to the wars. The glory 's all very well, but she can't spare the chap to win it."

"Very good o' you, Master Geordie! an' I know you means it kindly," said he; "an' here 's my paw, old feller! an' many thanks. But, Lord bless me! what 's a man without his battle. We was all on us made for fightin', — some wi' the babble-forks, like lawyers and parsons, and some wi' naked fists like me. All on us shud do the best we can, — an' gie the glory to God. I means to do mine, an' if I cums back wi' the belt, old Hiram shall play us a tune and we 'll hev a jig, and get drunk, and be merry."

"So we will," chimed in big Toon; "an' I knows you 'll win the belt, brother; an' it 'll be a feather i' the caps of all the tawnies."

"An' I hopes Master Geordie here 'll put it on the gravestone when I dies. It 'll read mighty fine on the gravestone; that is to say, if I gets it, which the chickens is n't hatched at present," said Nosey.

"Never fear for the chickens, brother. A game-cock like you knows how to hatch his eggs; and I 'll take charge of the gravestone, when the time comes, if I live longer nor you; an' I means to put the fight in a book when it comes off, anyhow."

"In a book, Master Geordie! a real book o' print. Gosh gudderkins, that 's better nor bein' i' 'Bell's Life,' an' 'Bell's Life' ain't small beer. On'y think, Brother Toon, o' me bein' put in a book the same as Boney and the Iron Duke."

"Grand as apple-dumplin's!" said Toon. "A chap need n't wish for note better nor a good line on a gravestone, an' to be put in a book."

"All my eye!" said Hiram, who came up to us in time to hear big Toon's apotheosis of life. "All my eye, Brother Toon. What 's it matter when a chap 's dead, what 's said, or who says it. He won't heer 'um, nor speer 'um, when his bed 's made, with a shovel an' spade. His house is dark, an' his body is stark; and nobody sweeps his floor, or keeps his door. But he lies, without eyes, or ears, or

feelin's; all under his mouldy ceilin's. Give him a pot o' good beer whilst he 's alive an' kickin', — stuff his belly wi' beef an' tommy, stan' his friend to the end, whilst he 's livin', an' tell no lies about him when he 's dead and buri-ed. Eh! Master Geordie! Ain't that it?"

"No, stumpy, it ain't," said I. "It 's on'y half o' what 's due to a chap o' mettle. I 'd treat him well while he lives, and do him considerable praises for his vartues, — and when he dies I 'd let the world know what a fine feller 's gone from it."

"That 's the ticket," said Nosey. "Who 'd like to be buried and forgot like a dog?"

"Pull up there, brother!" cried Toon; "and don't go for to say ort agin' a dead dog, or a chap's nateral feelin's, as is alus a thinkin' on him, though he be 's buried, an' ain't a goin' for to be fondled no more, the purty beast! I tell you, Brother Nosey, that a chap may bury a dog as he buries his friend, an' never forget the day that brote him the sorrer."

"I knows all about that, you soft-hearted tawny!" said Nosey. "An' I did n't mean to offend you, brother, an' speak an indecent word of poor Tibby; but a man ain't a dog arter all, big Toon, an' he wants a word on his gravestone to tell what kind o' a chap lies below."

"No 'casion for 't at all," said Hiram. "Them stones is such almighty liars that I alus s'pects a chap they speaks well on.

Demus, domus, dock!
The mouse run'd up the clock;
The clock struck one,
The mouse was gone,
Demus, domus, dock!

Read the morale, Brother Nosey!"

"D—n the moral, you fiddlin' whelp of a tinker!" said Nosey. "You ain't got no spunk, nor the pride o' a man in all your cat-guts. Stick to the book, Master Geordie!" he added, turning to me, "and never mind that old humbug's deviltry."

"So I will, brother; and as for Hiram, you may see that he ain't in earnest, because he 's forgot to make his words jingle."

"That 's no sign, Master Geordie, mine! An' if you wants the jingle — double or single — my words shall mingle — like coos in a dingle, till all your ears tingle."

"Tingle they do," cried I, "mine at least. And now I see that you 've cumed to your senses, and so I will wish you a good evening. I 've got some business to attend to which calls me back to my tent."

During the latter part of the conversation we were sitting under the shade of a great oak-tree that grew by the roadside, not far from which two gypsy horses and a donkey were grazing. And as I turned round to take a look at the group and the scene, which George Morland would have made a beautiful wayside picture of, I saw that my pals had already lighted their pipes, and were lying luxuriously upon the grass, under the tree's shadows.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HEALING HAND.

THE moon arose, and stood still over Granny Mabel's tent as I entered the encampment. I also stood still, and began to meditate. What was this mystery which I was called upon to perform? and why was I especially selected for the purpose? That Myra believed there was virtue in the human hand, and that I could impart it to her, by some process which at present was unknown to me, I had no doubt. But what that virtue was, and how I was to exhibit it, perplexed me not a little. I remembered, however, what big Toon had said about it, and the religious earnestness of his manner when he rebuked me for doubting its efficacy. I was satisfied also that the gypsies had secret knowledge of a strange, if not supernatural character, through which, under the vulgar symbolism of palmistry and other occult branches of their system of fortune-telling, they frequently made revelations and predictions of a most startling nature. My connection with Myra, and her intimate acquaintance with my thoughts and feelings, as well as with the plan of my destiny and her own, were all essentially mysterious; and whatever related to Violet, as I must call her for the future, she was as conscious of as if that beautiful blue-eyed maiden had been her Oversoul.

And the more I reflected upon the connection which existed between us three, the more mysterious did it appear. They both seemed to be a part of me, and so closely bound up in my life and fate that I could not divorce them. When I analyzed my feelings I knew also that I loved them both, although I could not help confessing to myself that Myra held me with the stronger cords. She was made to be loved, and was beautiful enough for a lover's idolatry. I felt this, and was sometimes half afraid to trust myself in her presence. For passionate natures like mine, especially when they meet with a passionate response, are not always under the control of conscience. And the abiding, never-sleeping prescience of what was ordained of me, admonishing me that Myra could never be mine,

not only rendered my position with respect to her painful in the extreme, but sometimes made me suffer a martyrdom of tortures. For I felt bound by honor and integrity to keep myself in subjection to the uttermost of my ability when I was with her, — although, as the reader knows, I often succeeded badly enough. I loved her dearly, — how dearly I dare not say. And yet there was always a gulf between us, of whose existence we were both thoroughly aware; although the consciousness of it was more vivid sometimes than at others. I had been as happy with her whilst the dream lasted, as I ever can be again in any similar dream; and never did she for one moment appear to me otherwise than beautiful, and worthy of honor and love. She fully reflected and represented one part of my nature, but when I wanted higher companionship and sympathy I found it not in her. How could I expect it? Yet she was very quick and apt to learn in a certain sphere, and was, as I said, extremely fascinating. But she knew, what I also felt, that in Violet she had her superior in mental if not in personal attractions. And always, from the first moment of my seeing her, I felt drawn towards Violet in my highest moods, and she was daily and hourly growing upon me as the ideal of womanhood. How was this? I knew little about her, — next to nothing. But in all my silent moments she was ever with me. She and Myra! I could not separate them. Whilst I was thinking of one, the image of the other would steal over my senses and my soul, — until they floated into an individuality which partook of the lineaments of both. It was all a mystery, and no less so was this of the Healing Hand. And as I now stood in the encampment turning these things over in my mind, I confess that a feeling of awe came over me, as if I were about to enter the presence-chamber of supernatural beings, and become the agent of their power. This feeling soon vanished, however, before the remembrance that Myra was suffering, and that through me she expected to be relieved. If I had the power then to do her such service, it was selfish and unmanly to question the character of the means. My heart also yearned towards her, and at last I thought I heard her voice calling me aloud by name. Instantly all the floodgates of my love burst open as if by magic, and I sprung forward, crying as I went, "I come, dearest! I come!"

I hastily drew aside the canvas of Granny Mabel's tent and entered. A single candle was burning upon a wooden stool, in the middle of the apartment, giving to it a dim and unearthly appearance. The old dame was squatted close to the light, with a small

square board upon her knees, the surface of which was covered with outlandish characters, inscribed by a piece of chalk which she held in her right hand. She was so absorbed in the contemplation of her astrological programme, that she did not hear me enter. So I went and stood by her side and had a full glimpse of her handiworks, the leading feature of which was a crescent moon; the other lineaments of the cabalistic portraiture were so foreign and involved to my eye, that I could make nothing of them.

"Well, granny," said I, "I am here at Myra's request, and I want you to tell her brother Geordie how she is, and when she wishes to see him."

"Not yet," replied the old dame, without taking her eyes from her work. "Not yet, Master Geordie; but the moment is near by, an' may the Great Name speed the cure!"

"But is she very ill, granny dear? And do you think the poor bushnie chap can do her any good?"

"Lord! Lord! what unbelievin' squads is this queer world made on!" said she. "As if the Great Name had n't blessed the Healin' Hand through all the tawny generations, and put the cuss of mildew i' the Evil Eye. Come now and sit down i' the straw, Master Geordie, an' mind what I says to you; and don't go for to put on no larfin', scoffin' aces, but hear the old gypsy woman talk as knows."

"Very well, granny, I will sit down beside you in the straw and hear attentively all you says to me; and I ain't agoin' to mock the gray head of my brothers' and sisters' grandam, you may be sure. Nobody iver seed me do such an act of dishonor to the aged, and I ain't agoin' to begin now."

"That 's my darlin' Geordie! Spoke jist likes him, — an' no flies! An' the tawnies does well to love him as their brother. So then I shall begin to give the dearie his lesson."

With that she set the board down against the stool, and dropping the chalk into her lap bent forward to where I was sitting so that the yellow light fell upon her face, which now looked very, very old, withered, and wrinkled, as if she had stalked "over the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries."

"Hear the word o' the ancient Toon woman, Master Geordie," she began, "and she 'll tell a tale that is n't no lie. I' the days afore the Pharaohs, a man wi' a long white beard cumed one night to the gypsy tents o' the tribe of Zimri. He war a down old chap, an' he helped to keep himsen up wi' a long staff, for his body war nigh bended double, and he had cumed a weary way and war footsore,

for he lived i' a den o' rock in the big dassart, where the fierce sarpent puts out his forked tong an' the tawny lion do roar at nights, an' the prey-birds screams an' cries. But war the old chap afeared o' the lions and sarpents? I hopes you won't mention it, Master Geordie! Not he, indeed. For he war a good bushnie, an' war the favorwright o' the Great Name, who sent the purty angelers, wi' the faces like the mornin' sun, and the gowden wings on their back, to tak care on him, an' teach him to master the dum' beasties by the glance o' his eye. An' the purty angelers got so fond on him at last, that they showed him all the secrets o' airth, — an' the spiruts an' fetches an' ghosts o' all the dead that lies under the airth; and teld him the trick wherebies he could mek 'um do all good thin's he war a mind to. Well, when he cumed near the tent o' Zimri — who war a young sprig an' had just married a vargin o' the Azra tribe — Zimri goes out for to meet him, and says to him, says he — bowin' his obedience to the old chap, as was right an' proper — says he: 'The blessin's o' the evenin' to you, father! my good old man wi' the long beard! Won't you please to step this way into my tent,' says he, 'an' eat some goat-meat an' figs as I've got inside. They be very sweet an' good, I assures you, an' at your service.' 'Thankee, young man,' said the ould un i' reply, 'I be varry tired and a hungered, an' I'll cum into the tent an' eat the dainty figs an' goat's meat, an' stay all night wi' you.' So Lustra, who was Zimri's wife, went an' fetched a bucket o' water an' a clout, and washed the old chap's feet, an' made him lie down on her own litter, and tucked him in wi' her colored shawl as she wore on'y on hollerdays an' at fair times, or when she went a walkin' with the blessed young man — her husband — for to see the races. An' Zimri an' his wife laid them down aside him an' went to sleep like honest folk. Next mornin' they war up afore the fust cock had crowed, an' when the old chap went out to get the mornin' air an' hear the purty birds a singin', Lustra axed him how he 'd passed his sleepin's, an' behaved hersen to him for all the world like a born lady. So the old un war varry pleased wi' her and the young man Zimri, her husband, as the tale has said afore, an' says again, an' says he to Zimri, says he: 'Young man you've done the right thin' by me, an' so hes this young 'oman, an' I alus does good to them as does good to me; an' I wishes you,' says he, 'to do the same, and pass that sayin' o' mine down to all your tawny brats an' bolshins, through all the generations o' your loins. An' now,' says he, 'cum inside the tarpaulin' an' I'll tell you a secret that the purty angelers in the gowden wings hes teld me. But fust o' all,' says he, an' lend

your ears to this, Master Geordie, 'fust o' all, you 've got to believe what I says; if you goes for to doubt it, you can't do nothin' wi' the secret. So, young man an' woman, do you find yoursens abilitated to believe?'

"'Certainly we does,' says they.

"'Then i' that case,' continued the old chap, 'I 'm permitted to blab the hidden thin'. So here goes. There 's a angeler,' says he, 'as attends every man what 's born, an' is willin' for to do good to him an' help him for to do good to tothers. An' if a tawny chal bes sick an' one that ain't o' his kin blood opens his right hand, an' he 's the faith that the angeler will go for to use it to do a cure, then he may buck that for a ticket.'

"'Is you attendin', young uns, to the law as I am a layin' on 't down?'

"'Sure as a corpse,' says they.

"'Then the chap what 's goin' to act the droll,' says he, 'must put his hand on the head o' the sick un', and draw it gently down his face an' body till he blinks and wants to go to sleep; an' when he wakes up the evil thin' that war on him will be gone. But the angeler won't stir a peg,' says he, 'unless you believes he hes the power to be so varry vartuous'; an' that 's but accordin' to reason, Master Geordie, an' I hopes you ain't agoin' for to doubt the talk, because it 's all true, as I 've seed it done to them as belongs to me, an' I 've done it mysen a hundred times i' my life to the sick bushnies' childer; an' they calls it a warkin' by charms, an' sich rubbish, not a knowin' what they says, the poor ignorant hottentotters!"

"Well, granny," said I, "it 's a long yarn, and I 'm not in the mood to deny its truth. I 'll believe anythin', if I can do my beautiful sister good."

"I knowed it, my dearie bantlin'! I knowed you 'ud. An' now 's the time to go to her. Is you quite ready, Master Geordie? An' is your faith as strong as beer, or the tawny lions o' the dassart where the old chap I 've teld you about lived i' his time?"

"It is, granny. And if faith and love can cure the bushnie's sister, she will soon be well."

"Come this way, then, Master Geordie," said the old dam, eagerly and earnestly, as she seized my arm. Then pushing aside an awning which led into a narrow canvas passage, she hurried me into Myra's tent.

The contrast between her apartment and the one I had just quitted was apparent as soon as Mabel lighted it up, which she did

quickly and noiselessly with four tallow candles, placing them upon a large trunk, so that the light was well scattered about the tent. Myra was reclining rather than lying on her couch, which consisted of what, for tent life, might be called a luxurious bundle of straw, covered with sheepskins, the wool of which was dyed in various colors. Two stools and sundry boxes, disposed with care and neatness, were the only furniture; and these answered the purpose of a wardrobe, for shawls and various articles of female apparel were strewn over them. A small looking-glass was suspended from the roof by a string, which bore also a comb and hair-brush, and I noticed two or three of my own books scattered about the room. This simple inventory was taken at a glance as old granny left me standing for a moment, when the candles were lighted, whilst she went and spoke to Myra. And it was but a moment; for Myra, who expected my visit, rose suddenly from her recumbent posture, and sat upright on her couch, stretching out her arms, and calling me to her in a wild, passionate voice which pierced my very heart. I sprang forward at a bound, and clasped her in my arms, as the old woman left the tent. O, that clasp! that wild, wild clasp! Mingled as it was with sadness at the sight of her suffering face, so beautiful in its suffering! I could have held her close to my inmost soul forever, so sweet, so sad, so unspeakable was the ecstasy of my feelings. Again I was lost in her; my whole consciousness absorbed in a love that seemed infinite, and yet not vast and strong and measureless enough for the beating heart that loved. It was a silent embrace, a long and silent intermingling of heart and soul and sense, too dear and sacred to be profaned by words; and when at last our lips met, and we grew faint with excess of emotion, I gently released her from my arms, and laid her down softly on the couch. Her dark eyes closed, and the long lashes slept upon her pale and marble cheek, — and a sweet smile played faintly on her lips, suffusing an expression as of moonlight and music over her face, whilst her black hair fell over her shoulders and bosom, mingling their beauty in its midnight glory.

Instantly I bethought me of the object of my visit, and the idea of the Healing Hand became so vivid in my mind as almost to assume an objective form. The conditions for the experiment could not, I felt, be more favorable, — for the sympathy between us was so perfect that she seemed to be a part of my being. With full faith, therefore, in the power of the charm, I placed my hand upon her head, and then passed it gently over her face and person, released from contact. The effect was almost instantaneous. A deep calm

fell over her face; the eyes closed more firmly, the lips were motionless, and the healing sleep was upon her. I stood over her for a few moments, my soul was ravished with her exceeding loveliness, and I thought how sweet it would be to die for one so dear, so beautiful. Kneeling down by her side I bent over her and kissed her cheek and forehead, and with a sincere though unspoken prayer in my heart for her, I returned to old granny's tent.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HOSTEL OF THE GOLDEN LION AT FLAMBORO', AND WHAT COMPANY WAS THERE.

"DOES she sleep, Master Geordie? Has the blessed sleep cumed upon the darlin' dearie?" asked the old dame.

"Yes, granny," I said, "and I hope she 'll soon be better."

"Thanks to the Great Name!" she replied, piously. "Yes, Master Geordie, she 'll soon be better."

"Can I do anything else for her, granny? Shall I wait till the sleep 's left her and see how she is?"

"No need to wait for that, ye misbelievin' bushnie! Ye 've got no faith i' your bowels arter all; though ye hev seed the power o' the Healin' Hand wi' your own misguided peepers. I tells you, Master Geordie, that she 'll rise up from this sleep as well as ye an' me be. For was n't the hand o' the bushnie willin', and the moon i' the right line o' the heavens?"

"True, granny; and God send all good influences to my darling sister! I did n't mean to ask you whether I should stay to see if the power failed, or if it did n't, but whether it was necessary for me to stay, as I have business out of the tents for more nights than this present."

"Then go your ways, Geordie dear. You can't do her no more good; an' old granny's blessin' go along wi' ye!"

"Thank you, granny; and be sure you tell Myra I shall come back as soon as I can, an' give her more lessons in books, and the bushnie larning."

"Ide-dide, wi' your bucks and rubbish. I niver could see the good o' sich like thin's, — which is fit on'y for the parson chaps as wears them white chokers round their necks as if they was a goin' for to be hung up. But I 'll tell her, Master Geordie, I 'll tell her!"

So I wished her good night, for it was nearly ten o'clock; and going to my tent dressed myself in the clothes I had brought with me from Burlington, and straightway took the road for Flamboro' village, which was only about a mile off.

Calm and beautiful lay the moonlight over the landscape as I went forth into the night; and very great was the silence. Man and beast and bird and insect had ceased from their labors, and had gone each to his rest. Neither moth nor beetle flitted nor droned through the air; nor winged bat — that monstrous creature whose prototype lived and died — as his fossil effigy proclaims — innumerable ages before my great progenitor was fashioned out of the clays of Mesopotamia. All was still; and through the silence afar off, and far below me, came at intervals the muffled booming of the breakers against the rocky beach. Up in heaven, too, the moon and stars, "unutterably bright," were all silent, and seemed to look down from their sublime altitudes, through the moving processions of clouds, in speechless sorrow. I, too, was sad, for my heart was with Myra, and I longed to learn the issue of my experiment.

When I arrived at the inn called the Golden Lion, the Flamboro' church clock was just striking eleven. The door of the hostel was closed; although I knew by the light which broke through the chinks of the window-shutters, and also by the uproar of voices within, that accommodation might still be had there for money, and that nobody was thinking about bed at that respectable hour of the night. So I knocked boldly; the first time, however, with no effect, for I dare say nobody heard me. The second time I applied my stick on the oaken panels to such purpose that there was immediate silence in the room whence the noise proceeded, and then the creaking of an inner door announced that some one was approaching through the passage to demand of the knocking man who he was that knocked thus sturdily.

"Wat d' ye whant?" said the voice of this invisible person. To which I replied, "A bed and entertainment for a day or two."

"Who are yer?" was the rejoinder.

"I 'm the stranger," said I, "from the clothing town of Leeds, who is to talk to the Flamboro' fishermen to-morrow."

"O, you be, be yer? Then tak my advice, an' gang yer ways fra where ye cumd from. For bed o' mine you waint lie in to-neet, not at no price."

"And why not, Mister Landlord? I 'm a traveller, and you keep, or should keep, a house for travellers. And I advise you to open the door and let me in, or you may find it all the worse for yourself when I pull you up before the squire in the morning."

"What does I care for 't squire, or a chap like yew other, d' ye think, a cumin here to distarb the parish, an' spile an honest man's

trade? Budge, my chap, as soon as yer a mind to. You ain't a goin' to sleep i' my house I can tell yer, an' that 's flat."

So saying he left me to my meditations, retreating up the passage like a surly bulldog, and slamming the door after him to ease his bile.

I meant to take up my quarters, however, at this inn, and was n't going to be thus nonplussed by my crusty landlord. So I knocked louder than before, and made the silent street echo with my small thunder. As this demonstration, striking as it was, did not answer the purpose, I began to beat the window-shutters to the lively tune of Rory O'More, and kept the music up so boisterously that there was presently a great rush of drunken feet to the door, and not a few Flamboro' oaths. I expected a row, for I knew the mettle of the men; but I also knew, if I could get time for an explanation, I could easily prevent it. So I hoped for the best, and stood on my guard. And it was well that I did so, for in another instant the door flew open, and out burst half a dozen men in blue frocks, one of whom aimed a blow at my face which I contented myself with stopping, calling to the man to listen to what I had to say, for I saw at once who he was, — being none other than my friend Gibbons, the boatman. I had stepped back during the onslaught, until I stood in the middle of the road, where the moonlight fell full upon me.

"Bill Gibbons!" I called out to him; "is this the way you treat your friends? Look up, man! Don't you know me?"

Thus apostrophized, he came within a foot of me, and bending his head and body with a half-cunning, half-incredulous expression of face, began to overhaul my features.

"Avast! there, lads," said he to his companions, who stood threateningly around me; "I knows the genelman. It 's him what 's cumin to larn us. Cum in, sir. Cum in 't house. How the devil did it all happen?"

"You 'd better ask the landlord," said I, as we entered the revel room, which proved to be the kitchen. "He knows best. I asked him to admit me as civilly as one man knows how to speak to another, and he told me to go back to Leeds, and not come here to spoil his trade; and as Leeds is a long way off, and I was tired, I thought the man was a little unreasonable; so I knocked away outside until you chaps came out to knock me down."

"I 'se very sorry for 't, sir; but you sees we war n't bound to know who was outside a knockin', and old guts, there, niver teld us. What 's yer got to say for yoursen, yer old screw?" he added, addressing the "guts" aforesaid.

"How sud I know he was the genelman from Leeds, cumin wi' a fine tale at this time o 't neet?"

"But I told you who I was and what was my business," said I, with a little nettle in the tone.

"O, ah! Ye teld me. But if I was t' open doors to every chap what tells a fine tale o' neets, I sud hev enough to do to git um airt agen."

"Well," I said, "here I am, and no thanks to you; and if you don't pay glasses round for these wet chaps, I 'll do as I told you I would, and punish you by as heavy a fine as the law will let me; and you need n't think I 'm joking and don't mean it, for by the Lord, good man, I never was more in earnest in my life."

"That 's right, sir," said a little spare man, coming up to me and offering his hand. "I 'se the sculemaster as wrote that letter to yer to Burlington, and I be glad to see yer; and we 'll mek the landlord pay for his sauce."

"To be sure he sall!" cried several voices. "Mine 's a quart," said one. "So be mine!" said another. And in this way the orders were given; and the landlord was obliged to execute and pay for them, much to his abhorrence and openly expressed disgust.

"It 's no use turnin' up your nose like a evil bowsprit, ode feller!" said Gibbons. "The pots hes to be filled, and you hes to pay for um. So do it wi' a good grace, man, as if yer loved it."

"See him fash!" said another to his mate; "he 'll niver git over it. It 'll break his heart."

"Let 's mek a 'scription for the ode beer buffer," said the schoolmaster.

And with these taunts the landlord had to put up as he best could, knowing which side his bread was buttered, and that it would n't do to offend his wild customers, lest they should take it into their heads to go a mile farther for their drinkings, at the sign of the Jolly Pirate, kept by Polly Dradda, of this parish. The good man, however, looked as maliciously as a crocodile at me, and would have liked, I dare say, to eat me up, barring the pains of digestion. I had met with as gruff customers before amongst his class, however, and was not at all alarmed at his evil looks. So, whilst the company sat and drank and talked, I filled my pipe and smoked, and took notes.

The kitchen we occupied was large, and fitted up for the comfort of guests. Rows of arm-chairs made of oak were arrayed on both sides of it, and an oak table stood in the middle. A fireplace big enough to roast a sheep, was all aglow with red-hot coals, although

it was summer time; and over the chimney wall hung brass candlesticks, and saucepans, and pewter plates, and sundry pewter pots, pints and quarts, all faultlessly polished. From the ceiling were suspended flitches of bacon, pigs' chops and hams, and strings of oatencake, each cake as large as a good-sized plate, and as thin as a pancake, but short and crisp; a kind of bread peculiar to Yorkshire and Lancashire, — and tasty enough with cheese and beer at luncheon, to those at least who are used to it and can digest it. A fowling-piece, which had evidently seen much service, hung upon the wall over the pewter ware; and the entire appearance of the room impressed one with the idea of substantiality in the larder, and altogether of a well-to-do house.

I did not expect to get much sense, or information of the kind I wanted, out of my jolly fishermen, at this hour of the night, and under the potent circumstances in which I found them; for although they were good Bacchanals, they were not Lysians, drink tending to make them more noisy than wise; as is generally the case, unless we happen to be guests at some Banquet of the Sages. Here, however, was the material upon which I should have to work, and out of which I had to form my big-boy school. And as the men were not, learnedly speaking, drunk, — that is to say so drowned in brewis as to go to the pump to light their pipes, — but fuddled merely, up to the point of spend-all and devil-may-care, I thought I might as well make myself agreeable by making them important enough to be questioned; so I launched myself for a while into the noisy surges of their humor, and then turning abruptly to Gibbons, I said:

"Do you think we shall get up a good muster of the men to-morrow night, so that we may have a fair start?"

"Ay, ay, sir! no doubt on it; but they wants to know where they is to meet; and not knowin' myself, I could n't undertake to answer 'um."

"Well," said I, "we 'll see about that to-morrow. I dare say the parson will lend us the school-room. Don't you think so, Mr. Snorra?"

"Why, as for that, sir, I don't know. He be a mighty queer chap, he the parson; though I says it as should n't, as get my livin' under him."

"But he takes an interest in the parish school, don't he? And if he cares about the children, surely he won't stand in the way of the men's improvement."

"I 'se not so sure of that, sir. You sees he belongs t' high church party; an' if we don't hev the catekise along wi' t' other larnin', an' believe i' the Father, Son, an' Holy Ghost, an' all the whole kit on

'um, I 'se afeard we sha'n't get his countin' house, an' so the whole thing 'll go to ruin."

"He knows, sir! the sculemaester does," said Gibbons, giving me a dig in the ribs to command my best attention to that worthy's words.

"Ah, he knows!" replied another, before I had time to put in a rejoinder. "To be sure he do," he added sarcastically. "But the parson ain't a goin' for to make us chaps swaller all his nonsense. I 'se a Methodyke i' my religion, sir," turning to me, "and I am agoin' to be damned sooner nor the parson shall make me into a church goose to be picked by fingers of hisen."

"Hold hard there! Ben Olaff!" said his next neighbor, interrupting him, taking his pipe from his mouth at the same time and blowing the smoke into Ben's face. "Hold hard there, will you, and don't take on about bein' damned that way. I've heerd that it ain't a pleasant thing to be damned, and sooner talked on nor liked. Howsumever, every man to his fancy. But what I want to know is this: what 's the parson got to do wi' us at all? Ain't we free to do as we pleases? We pays him to marry us, and we pays him to christise the bairns, and do a churchin' for the women; and we pays him to berry us. Ain't that enough for one chap to hev to do wi' us and we wi' him, I should like to know? Is he to hev a finger i' every fish we catches, or ivery pie we eats? I say, no! an' my name 's Jack Frid, as niver says what he don't mean."

"All right, Jack," said the schoolmaster; "an' thou 's a honest, good chap, we all knows; but if the parson goes agin us, where 's the meetin' to be held, and where 's the men to larn to write and count, and hev their books and news sheets kep?"

"Avast there, John, son o' John!" cried Ben Olaff to Mr. Snorra. "Is n't I the biggest downer to the Methodykes? An' does n't I pay more for seat rent than ony on 'um? An' did n't my fifty pund help to build t' new chapel? Well, then, gether up the clews an' you 'll discover that it means we can hev t' use o' the Methodyke chapel rather nor drift wi' out a harbor. That 's my say."

"But," said I, "it is n't at all certain that the parson will refuse to lend us the school-room, or that he will insist upon our becoming churchmen as the condition of his lending it. I think we had better wait and hear what he says himself. I will call upon him early in the morning, and if all 's right, I will send the bellman round and let you know where we are to meet."

"That 's it," cried one. "Good!" said another; and so arranging the matter, I left my wet-men to their pipes, beer, and religion, and betook myself to bed.

CHAPTER XVII.

TALK WITH BILL GIBBONS. — DEEP-SEA SWIMMING. — BLOODY BELDIN, THE PIRATE. — FISH SALE ON THE BEACH. — IGNORANCE OF THE FISHERMEN.

I AROSE early the next morning and went to the "North Sea" haven, where I found the fishermen all astir. A whole fleet of boats was lying high and dry upon the beach, through which I waded my way down to the sea-shore. Here I met Bill Gibbons, who looked as fresh as a new-caught herring, although he could not have had more than four hours' sleep after his last night's heavy drinking. I had a mind for a sea-swim in deep water; so I engaged him to pull me out beyond the offing. As we left the shore he said:

"You found us rather drunken last night, sir; but none the war for that I hope. We Flamboro' chaps likes a sup of drink. But you may find war than we be i' the airth for all that."

"I 've no doubt of it, Bill; but you 'd save a power of money and keep your health and happiness better if you gave mine host of the Golden Lion and Polly Dradda the cold shoulder once for all."

"I knows it, your honor, I knows it. And yet it 's all the comfort we gets i' our lives. We works hard, i' all weathers, and makes plenty of brass, and knows no good on 't but to spend it."

"And yet, Bill, there 's a deal of good to be got out of money, if one only makes a wise use of it. There is n't a man on the headland who might not easily have become the owner of his own cottage, and have bought land near it, for a garden and orchard, if he had been careful and saving, instead of prodigal and lavishly spendthrift."

"True again, sir; but it 's no use talkin'; we 've got into the way on 't, and can't get out. We go i' gangs, here; an' what one does, — if approved, — all does. We back one another up like brick walls."

"And is there no one amongst you all brave and courageous enough to say to his mates, 'Here, boys! I ain't going to drink again, but to save my money to buy the house I live in, and lay up for the dark days'?"

"Not me — by the painter!" he replied. "I ain't got pluck enough. I'd follow the fleet; but I dassent histe the fust flag to rebel. They'd hang me up for a pirate."

"That won't do, Bill. You're no coward, I dare be sworn on the book. And if you took the thing into your head you'd do it, — hanging or no hanging."

"Coward?" said he, resting on his oars, with a complacent smile; "no, your honor, I don't think I'm exactly a coward; and I don't think there's a man down there as 'ud say I am. For I fear neither hog, dog, nor devil, — and yet it 'ud take more spunk than I can boast to try an' change the drinkin' ways of my chaps."

"Well, I'm not a cold water devil, Bill, seeking whom I may devour of all the followers of Messrs. Malt & Hops; but make a note of what I've said to you, — and talk it over amongst the best fellows you've got, and see what comes of it. Why, man, you might, by clubbing together, buy a large steamer to take you and your boats out for the deep-sea fishing, and save not only time and money thereby, but life also; and add immensely to your comforts and wealth, and become the most important fishing village on the whole coast. It's no dream, Bill, I assure you; but a thing that could easily be done."

"Perhaps it might, sir," he said, thoughtfully. "And it's a new thote. But we be hard to move i' Flamboro'."

"Everybody is hard to move at first, Bill — but there's nothing like pushing, and hammering, and working — if you mean to do anything. Hit hard, and keep at it. Don't be down-hearted and afraid. No good comes of fear, which was always an evil thing from the beginning of days. I've plenty of people hard to move in my line of business, and yet I do manage to move them, nevertheless. When I go into a village where there is no school for children; where there are no books nor newspapers for grown-up folks to read, — and I'm sorry to say there are many such in Yorkshire, and I have no doubt in many other parts of England, — I say, when I go into such places, with the idea of founding humble schools, and libraries, and reading-rooms in them, I don't find it very easy to do, I can tell you; often very hard to do, and what a sluggard would say was impossible to do. But I don't care a rush for hard, easy, or impossible. I am there to do it, and do it I must and will. I don't say it as a boast — but as a stimulus for you — when I add that I have never yet failed to accomplish my purpose, whenever I have made up my mind to do it. A good deal lies there, Bill, in the making up of one's mind. A man puts on his armor in that act, and mustering all the

forces of his courage and wit, goes forth bravely to conquer. A romancing man would say to conquer or die. But there 's no die in it. Conquest, conquest! that is the beginning and the end of all grand resolutions. I don't want to blow my own trumpet, as I said to you, but within these last nine months I have founded libraries, reading-rooms and schools in thirty-six villages, — and now I 've come to do the like in Flamboro'; and I shall succeed; because I know you will all help me, in spite of the parson, — if the parson, that is, should turn out spiteful."

"We will, by God, sir, and that 's a fact!" said he, earnestly. "Our chaps don't like water boys, but they can tell a frigate from a cock-boat, all the same."

"Good, then. Pull a little this way, Bill, more to the south'ard. Steady. Now lie to, whilst I undress; and follow me gently when I am fairly afloat on this glorious, sparkling brine."

Bill did as he was requested, and I presently plunged from the bows into the sea. A long dive, and then up to the surface and away! away! over the buoyant, laughing, sunny waves. You, oh reader! who cannot swim, know nothing of the glory, the wild delight which a good swimmer enjoys by the exercise of his beautiful art. His arms and legs are wings with which he cleaves the azure vault of the deep. Above him the great blue sky; below him the abode of the dread sea population, over which he sails proudly and without fear. The waves, so dreadful to the uninitiated, come to him lovingly, like brides, kissing his lips and cheeks, and pressing their heaving bosoms against his, as they waft him from one to the other, and every now and then they encircle his head with a streaming coronal of spray. He is the king of that empire, and rides over it proudly upon his foaming chariot. To me there is an exquisite pleasure and satisfaction in swimming. I love to feel the waters under me, and hear the cry of the deep, — deep calling unto deep. It seems to me that I have made more noble and useful this wonderful, beautiful, and useful body since I have learned to swim. I have given it another faculty, and have made it amphibious and equal to the fishes. I wish I could fly as well as I can swim. The birds are the only creatures of God that I now envy. I covet their "petty omnipresence," and I do not like that such little creatures should be able to do what a strong man like me can't. It is no fault of mine, however; for human shoulders don't grow wings, and without such help the gravitation of the earth will always prove too much for a man's body. If I had the power to fly, and did not use it, I should

be ashamed of myself, in this working, practical universe. A man's faculties were given him for development, not for rust or rot. Hence, because all can learn who try, all ought to swim. Neither man nor woman, boy nor girl, has any excuse for drowning. What business has any one to be drowned? I mean, of course, upon occasions of ordinary accident, such as the upsetting of a boat upon a river, or falling overboard! "Shepherd Smith," as he is called in England, or to give him his proper style and name, the Rev. W. E. Smith, so long editor of the *Family Herald*, whose "leading articles" in that journal are the choicest specimens of English essay writing, and contain some of the finest thinkings and philosophical speculations which have been contributed to modern literature; this rare scholar and author, in one of the essays alluded to, takes the same view of swimming that I do, and thinks its importance to human health and life can scarcely be overestimated. "A pleasure-boat upset on the Thames," he says, "would in all probability end in the drowning of one or more, perhaps of all the party it contained; whereas a similar accident on an American river, to savage Indians in their canoe, would be rather a subject for fun and frolic, as a good practical joke of the elements; and man, woman, and child would swim playfully to the shore." "Gather up the clews, then," as Ben Olaff says, and apply the "morale," which I take to be, that everybody who don't learn to swim deserves to be drowned. Americans, in particular, whose river systems are so vast, and whose lakes are almost continental in dimensions; who are the greatest travellers in the world, as a people, and who are constantly perilling life upon those waters, ought surely to be able to swim well. Yet how few of them can! I know that life is cheap here; almost as much so as when, among the Anglo-Saxons, murders could be commuted for thrymsas, and I am sorry for it. But every man ought to value his own life, notwithstanding. Hear the word of Benjamin Franklin about swimming. He is a good man and a good authority, and not one in all his time could match him as a swimmer, either here or in Europe. Mighty Franklin! strong throughout the entire gamut of meaning in respect to strength; strong in intellect, in conscience, in action; with a body of iron and a capability for affairs equal to any dozen men he ever met with.

But I have left myself in the water, you will observe, all the time I have been talking, and so delighted have I been with the exercise, and so pleased with my own palaver, that I had forgotten the fact; and now that I remember it I will get into the boat again, for I have

already swam three miles. I once, in the year 1837, swam four miles in the Bay of New York, and although this is a poor feat after Franklin's magnificent performance between London and Blackfriars Bridges and back, against wind and tide part of the way, yet it was enough for my endurance, and so is my present swimming for the nonce. Lay to, then, Bill Gibbons, and carry the dolphin ashore.

As we passed the rocks on the south side of the little haven from which we started, and to which we were again hastening, "See, sir!" said Gibbons, "yon hoile in 't cliffs is what we calls the 'Pirate's Cave.' Did you iver see the Pirate's Cave, sir? It's worth your eyesight."

"No, Bill, I never did."

"Then i' that case, belike you'd have me pull to 't."

"With all my heart, Bill; pull away!"

A few vigorous strokes brought us close to it, and as my man said, it was worth looking at. It reminded me of a cathedral porch. The entrance arch was about eighty feet high; the length of the roof fifty feet, and the rocky walls corresponded with the height of the arch. It enclosed a basin of clear, greenish-blue water, into which we pulled the boat; and a more secluded and beautiful retreat, no pirate, nor smuggler, nor pleasure-seeker could desire.

"Why do they call this the Pirate's Cave, Bill?" said I. "Is there any legend attached to it?"

"They tell queer tales about it, sir," he replied, "down at Flamboro', a sittin' over their fires at neets, — but I ain't agoin' to say it be all true that I've heerd 'um tell; tho' I've knowed as rummy things done i' my time a'most, as they say Bloody Belden the pirate did here, an' at many's the t' other place on the coast. You see, sir, he war a Danishman, war Bloody Belden, an' lived a sight o' years ago, an' owned a craft as war painted black all over, hull and masts and bowsprit — an' alus sailed wi' a black flag flying. He fote all ships as cumed i' his way, — big and little, and niver gived quarter, — an' he alus beat, so he got rich by pillifering their cargoes an' lockers. He had fifty men i' command, all on 'um real tanned devils right through to the backbone; an' sometimes he wud fall on the villages near by the coast, an' do a power o' mischief, carrin off the bonniest lassies for hissen an' his hellies. But a Lincashire gal gived him his gruel at last, — an' sarved him right. You see, sir, he 'd made bold to sail up the Humber by Spurm Point, an' go down as far as Hull, where he landed, an' robbed a monkish place, where the monks rooked together an' prayed afore go'den candlesticks, an' altars o'

blazin' dimunds and rubby stanes. Then the Hull folk riz agin him, and driv him an' his chaps arter a bloody fite back to the ship, which so madded him that he swore he 'd hev vengeance; wi' that he set sail up t' river, an' cumed t' spot where t' Ouse an' Trent meet an' empty themsens into t' Humber. So he took the Lincashire water at a venter, an' cast anchor in the same — which is called the Trent river as I teld you — right afore Gainsboro' town. It war neetfall then — an' there war no moon; so he waited till t' moon riz; an' then he landed wi' thirty of his best men, who war the worst he had, you may be cock sure. Now there war an ode castle there i' them days belongin' to John o' Gaunt, who war a great lord as you belike knows a better nor me, — an' I've seed the place mysen, though they've changed its name, an' now calls it Gainsboro' Ode Hall; an' a grand ode hall it be, I tell yer. Well, Bloody Belden seed the lights in t' castle, an' thinkin' there wud be summat worth fightin' for inside, he an' his chaps swimmed across the moat, an' scaled the walls an' took the castle by surprise. John o' Gaunt war n't in t' house, but war away among the wars at that time, or Bloody Belden would a fared the worse for 't I 'm thinkin', if half be true on him as they romances about him. He had it all his own way, howsumdiver, had Bloody Belden, an' he carried off all the gode and silver he could find, and a pretty lassie also, a highborn dame, whose forbears lived at Torsey Castle, seven mile further up the river, and who war here a pris'ner, as the tale goes. You may be sure they did n't forget their eatin's an' drinkin's nuther; nor the vengeance they had vowed to hev. They made short work of the servants an' thirteen men-at-arms, an' cut their yeads off arter they had killed 'um, an' stuck 'um up on pikestaves, i' front o' the castle walls; an' so back to the ship; an' arter four days stormy weather they made Flamboro' Head, where Bloody Belden had his headquarters in a cave as big as Robin Lithe's, an' some says it 's to be seen now, and that they knows the secret on 't, — which if they does they ain't a goin' to blab," he added, with a cunning leer on his face which struck me as meaning more than his words, and which turned out so in the end, as the reader will learn hereafter. "Be that as it may," he continued, "Bloody Belden had a big cave, that 's sartin; an' in it he stowed away his valuables, an' this time the pretty lassie o' Torsey Castle also. Well, he fair fell i' love wi' her, an' wanted her for to marry him; but she war a plucky wench, an' had her forbears' grit in her, an' she would n't marry him; though he tried hard to please her, an' showed her his gode and silver and jewellery, an' offered her all he had, an' promised to tek her to

Denmark where he cumed fra, and mek her a bigger lady than she war afore he carried her fra John o' Gaunt's walls at Gainsboro'. But it war all o' no use. Then he took on, an' lost his savage ways, an' moped an' a'most went daft. They say he wud niver let her out of his eyesight, an' used to bring her to this varry cave, an' sit wi' her in his boat, whilst his merry devils played on their horns and sang for her amusement, though it war no amusement for her. At last when she found there war no chance of getting away fra him, she made up her mind to kill him; an' one day when they were on the water together, an' nubbudy else near by, she let him put his arm round her bonny waist, an' seemed to favor him more nor iver she done afore, till she got hold o' his dagger what hung in his belt, an' then, whilst he was a thinkin' it war all right, she gived him six inches o' t' cowd steel, an' sent him to glory. Then she tooked the oars hersen, an' pulled reight round the coast to t' mouth o' t' Humber, an' so up t' river past Hull and Gainsboro', back to Torsey Castle, where they all thote she war deed and buried long syne. That's the tale they tell, sir," he added, "about the death o' Bloody Belden the pirate; an' there's lots o' others about his black deeds, as has made my hairs stan' reight up a end many's the neet, over the old man's fire when I war a wee chap i' my fust breeches."

"And a good tale it is, Bill, in its way; and I never heard it before; although I know most of the legends about the Danish pirates and their doings on this East coast. But give way now, Bill, and let us get ashore; it must be past six o'clock, and I want to see the fish-sale on the beach before I go to breakfast."

A little fleet of fishing-boats, ten in number, was lying at anchor in the "North Sea," close to the shore, through which we steered, and soon after landed. Two or three hucksters were overhauling the cargoes, which consisted chiefly of ling, turbot, and codfish, and when they had concluded their examination they began to chaffer with the fishermen for bargains.

"What do you want for your taking to-day, Bill Haigh?" asked a short, squab, squint-eyed fellow, from Hull, who gloried in the name of Saintshins.

"Well, there's two hundred and seven on 'um," replied Bill, "and they weighs a sight, — eighteen pound apiece, little and big, all round. Take 'um away for two shillin' a fish, Master Saintshins."

"I don't buy that way," said Mr. Saintshins. "What'll you teck for the load?"

"They're worth two shillin' a fish, master; an' if you means to

buy, me or my mate 'll sell 'um for that, — an' hard-earned brass it be."

"I wishes I could get my money as easy as you chaps can fish it out of t' sea," said Saintshins; "but that's neither here nor there; I'll gie you ten pound for the haul."

"How much is that apiece?" asked Bill, with great simplicity.

"I don't know," said the huckster. "I 'se no schollard, but I vallies the fish at ten pound. I bought a better lot last week at Filey for six pound and a gallon o' ale."

"Who 's agoing to give ten pound for that ere boat-load o' fish as belongs to Bill Haigh?" asked a red-haired, red-faced, and grog-blossom-nosed man from Leeds. "You ain't the fool Saintshins, be you? Why, man, that 's more nor he axes! where be your 'rithmertic, Master Saintshins? Pay him his two shillin' a fish and that comes to nine pound, five bub, and a tizzie."

"Well, I 'm no schollard," replied Saintshins; "but I 'se a man o' my word, an' as I said I wad gie ten pound, ten pound 's the die."

"More fool you!" said the Leeds man; "an' fools an' their brass is soon parted," he added, as he walked off in dudgeon to another boat.

"Will you sell, Bill Haigh?" asked Saintshins; "you sees I've bid more nor you axes, and here 's the brass."

"'T ain't enough," said Bill; "I can't reckon it, — but 't ain't enough. Them fish is wuth twenty pound, if they're wuth a penny."

"Why you heerd what the Leeds man said, — at two shillin' apiece they comes to nine pound, five and sixpence. An' if you likes that better nor ten pound, it 's all one to me. So I 'se ready to buy 'um at your own price, Bill Haigh."

Bill took off his souwester and scratched his honest but most confounded head, and was in a real quandary, not knowing what to do or how to act.

"Have you heard all this conversation?" said I to Gibbons, who was lolling over the keel of a boat hard by, smoking his pipe with an air of supreme indifference.

"To be sure I have, sir," said he; "I could n't help it, bein' so near; but I 'se used to sich like chafferin', an' taks no heed on 't."

"But are you aware how this rascal is bamboozling that fellow with the big haul, whom you call Bill Haigh?"

"Ay, ay, sir; it 's the way o' these fish chaps, an' we 'se used to it."

"But don't you hear how he 's lying to honest Bill Haigh, Master

Gibbons, and a trying to make him believe that two hundred and seven fish at two shillings a-piece, come to nine pounds, five and sixpence."

"And he willin' to gie ten pund out o' generosity!" said Gibbons, cocking his north eye. "There 's somethin' wrong i' the 'rithmertic there, I 'se a notion, sir, ain't there?"

"Wrong! why it 's worse than thieving, Bill, to take advantage of a poor chap's ignorance in this way. Yon fish at two shillings apiece come to twenty pounds, fourteen shillings; and if you 're the man I take you for, Bill Gibbons, you won't lie smoking there and let your mate be cheated in that style."

"No more I will, sir, as true as God's shadder lies on t' water! What do you say them fish is worth?"

"Twenty pounds, fourteen shillings."

"Look you, Bill Haigh!" said Gibbons, as he rose from the boat and advanced to that worthy, "them fish, at two shillin' apiece, comes to twenty pund, fourteen shillin', an' Master Saintshins is a cheatin' on ye."

"And where did you get your countins on a sudden, that you 're so sharp this mornin', Bill Gibbons?" said Saintshins, with a sneer.

"Ne'er do ye mind where I got 'um fra'. They 're true as the book; that I knows, and dare lay my life on. And you ain't a goin' to cheat my mate, case he ain't a rethmeticker; an' if you 'd a tried to cheat me as you 've tried to cheat him, an' I 'd a fund it out, I wud a braked yer ugly mug for yer, as you desarves to hev it braked now."

"It 's very kind o' you to say so, Mister William Gibbons," said Saintshins, mockingly; "and I 'se obliged to yer for your good meanins, — but Bill Haigh an' me 'as had dealins together afore to-day, an' as he ain't a baby, I suppose he can do his own business without help from the likes of you."

"May be he can, and may be he can't. But you ain't a goin' to cheat him anyhow. So stick to the rethmertic, Bill Haigh, will yer, man? An' don't let a d—d skulkin' lubber like this e'er get to wind'ard o' ye."

"Od 's blood, huckster!" said Haigh, going up to the Hull chap; "I knows that Bill Gibbons speaks the truth, — for there 's the Leeds genelman behind him, as is a goin' to learn us to count as quick as ye can, an' I knows where Bill got his countins fra' if yew don't. An' though I 'se a peaceful man, — hev a care, huckster! Thankee, Bill Gibbons," he added, turning round and looking honest Bill in

the face, "and you too, sir," he said, nodding his souwester to me; "I'll keep a sharp lookout agin the sharks arter this, you may depend on't. And now, huckster, budge! for damme, if you buy any more fish i' Flamboro'."

"Stuff, man!" said Saintshins, laughing, "there's no harm in tryin' to git the best bargain a man can for hisself, is there? Be quiet. I'll gie ye twenty pund for the fish."

"Twenty thousand pund o' your money would n't buy 'um, huckster. They sud all rot i' the ceilins fust. Budge, man! budge, I say, or it'll be the warse for thy banes."

"You surely ain't in earnest, Bill Haigh! You, as hes had so many dealins along wi' me."

"If you stays hereby anuther minit," said Haigh, "I'll fetch thee down like a bowlder-stone from t' cliffs. Budge wi' thy horse and cart, an' let no honest man see thy face agin."

Saintshins finding now that the Flamboro' metal was roused and getting hot to a white heat, and meant mischief, skulked off without another word; and I, wishing Haigh good morning, walked towards the village accompanied by Bill Gibbons.

"Well, Bill," said I, as we reached the high road; "this little fracas between Haigh and yon huckster from Hull will serve us, I hope, when we meet this evening to talk about the man school."

"That it will, sir, you may depend," said he. "Now jist to think on't! how that chap must hev plucked us poor coots all this time o' years we've been a tradin' wi' him! And him to git off so easy too! Why he desarved a darnwright good lickin', — did n't he, sir?"

"That he did, Bill, and no mistake! But Haigh has punished him more than a licking would; and I trust you'll never allow the thief to come to your market again."

"Niver so likely, sir! Haigh has said the word, and what one on us says we all sticks to when approved, and wad carry out through yakers of blazin' brimstone."

"Then there'll be one rascal the less amongst you all, and it will be your own faults if you don't soon learn to beat the others at their own arithmetic; and I'm real sorry you've been swindled so long."

"So am I, sir," said Bill, pulling up on a sudden opposite the sign of the Jolly Pirate; "and bein' very dry, sir," he continued, "I'll jist call at Polly Dradda's, and wet my peepers this mornin'."

"If you wet both eyes, Bill," said I, laughing, "you must even wet your smeller also, to keep the ship steady, — so here's half a crown for the boat service, and a bran-new Victoria sixpence for the beer

ballast. But draw it mild, Bill! and don't lay on load too heavily; for pagan as I am, I 'm no lover of Bacchus, though I forswear myself sometimes, as I do in your case now, and pay my coin to his service."

"I hope your honor's conscience won't trouble you about this ere particler sixpence, — not this time, at any odds," said Bill comically as he spat upon the money, and then tossed it with his finger and thumb into the air "for luck," as he called it.

"I don't think it will," I replied; "although to speak truth it is a wicked sixpence, Bill, and you must take care the value of it don't choke you."

"Ay, ay, sir!" he rejoined, edging nearer and nearer to Polly's open and inviting door. "I 'll spend it fust of all, sir," he added; "for if I gits choked wi' her, I shall save my own brass anyhow." And so saying he made his exit from my presence, and his entrance into Polly's.

I now walked away rapidly to the Golden Lion, and after breakfast went into my bed-room, and dressed with more care than I usually bestow upon my person, even when state occasions call for my best draperies and attentions. I had abundance of time, however, for it was not yet nine o'clock; and I did not propose to call at the rectory until ten. So I "performed my toilette," as the novelists say, with a dainty idleness, and did my thinkings at the same time. I was a good deal disturbed at the thought of meeting Violet, and wondered if she would recognize me, although that she should seemed improbable enough. More improbable things had happened, however, in this world, and in my lifetime; but I resolved to preserve my gypsy incognito if I could, and at any hazard save that of falsehood. For although according to the current gallantry of the times — ancient and modern — all tactics are fair in love and war, I make little account of results which are obtained by falsehood, whether in large or small concerns, — and I find that there is no fair dealing which is not at the same time true dealing; that an end otherwise attained does not pay in the long run, or even in the short run, but takes its pay out of you; that nothing is permanent or productive but truth; truth therefore being the worldling's policy as well as the good man's duty. And if anybody is inclined to think that I exaggerate, and lay too much stress upon trifles, — I desire him to remember that nothing is trifling in all the ranges of human life, — that "trifles," so called, are as large and cosmic as revolutions, — as the solid globe itself, — nay, as all the universes; for they, too, are infinite. There is no little and no big; these are relative terms. I made up my

mind, therefore, to be truthful to Violet, and yet to preserve my own secret; to put my trust in God, that is to say, and keep my powder dry at the same time; which was Puritan Cromwell's advice to his Ironsides, and showed that whilst he believed in Providence, he believed also in gunpowder, and was more of a soldier than a saint after all; which is my case exactly. Indeed I don't like, and never did nor could like saints, who are always bilious and unhealthy people, and ought to be bled and purged every day, and sent to the gymnasium until they become good honest human sinners, like me and the rest of my brothers. I hope at all events they will have a heaven to themselves in the other astronomical life, — or that they will admit a little low comedy or broad, roaring farce to relieve the immense tragedy of the psalms and hallelujas.

And talking of saints reminds me that my Flamboro' parson was a saint, or had the reputation of being one, and I was curious to know of what peculiar breed he was. For there are as many orders and classes of saints as there are of sinners, and each one looks down upon the other with that supreme contempt which spiritual pride alone, of all the prides of life, is capable of engendering in the human heart. There is something not human in this ghostly egotism, not devilish even; for devils do love one another, and gladly recognize their highest rascal; but these saints have no sympathy out of their caste, and cordially hate one another. The Particular Baptist is chary of his wine at the "Lord's table" — as he curiously nicknames it — and hates the Hard Shell Baptist. The Evangelical clergyman hates the High Church clergyman; the Congregationalist, the Methodist; the Quaker, the Shaker; the Universalist, the Unitarian; and the Unitarian sits on his old worn-out stump and thinks he monopolizes the tree of life and also the tree of knowledge. But the little man is very much mistaken, and so are all the little men who hate each other so cordially, and who think they do God service in hating each other so cordially. I am in the secret and know, for I live in the arcana of Nature, behind the theological scenes a longish way, I think; and I know that no man does God service, or men either, by hate or pride, or by being "religious," which means so many evil things in these false and canting days; that it is better to love than hate, and that no one is beneath the sympathy of a good and great heart; not the thief, nor the murderer, nor the prostitute, nor even the different and differing saints themselves. Consider how the sun shines on the evil and the good alike, asking no questions; thinking, I dare say, that nobody is particularly good and nobody particularly bad, and

that if we all had our deserts we deserve to be promiscuously damned, only it is not worth while. For, after all, what are these fierce fighting, talking, working pismires that inhabit the ball of dust which we call a planet and the earth? God has his universe full of better ants, no doubt, and wiser, more truthful, and more sane. Indeed, I sometimes think that this earth is the lunatic asylum of our own immediate universe, — the solar one; that what we call our life here is but diseased action of diseased persons put into limbo here, and that what we call death is but an escape once more into sanity and saner regions. At all events, spiritual pride is no becoming garment for any one here to wear. *Memento, homo, quid cinis es, et in cinerem, reverteris.* Men forget now, however, that they are dust, or that they will return to the old womb, which is always breeding, always devouring, and never satiated by breeding and devouring.

Let us go, however, to see the Flamboro' parson and the pretty jewel he has in his house. For, thought I, as I touched the curl of my moustache with bandoline for the last time, it must be ten o'clock. So off I started, full of hopes and trepidations.

The parsonage-house stood in a garden by the roadside, nearly opposite to the church. It was a plain, substantial building, newly erected, but in no wise attractive, and might have belonged to a drab Quaker. How different many other parsons' residences which I know! For although I am a pagan, good reader, I am on good terms with the flower of the English clergy, and visit at their homes, and love them and theirs with a real, genuine human love, and no sham of love; and we get on bravely together, tolerant of differences, bearing and forbearing, and "in honor preferring one another." But understand always, that no parson of mine is a saint; all I love are good sinners like myself. And beautiful homes they have, worthy of such high and beautiful sinners, who do all their praying by the proxy of good deeds and kindnesses, which never find a tongue in the doer to blab them; by ministering to the sick and the wants of the poor; by comforting and advising the distressed, and by those odorous, nameless charities which are the lavender and roses of human life.

I opened the garden gate and walked along the gravel walk, which had flower-beds running all the length of it, on either side, right up to the lawn and the door of the rectory. A large Newfoundland dog, black and glossy, with a tail magnificently curled, and a most superb head and shoulders, with carcass to match, came bounding over the lawn to know who I was and what I wanted, so audaciously ringing

his reverend master's bell. And as he came closer to me, and pricked my hand with his cold but welcome snout, I bade him good morning in his own lingo, and soon satisfied his curiosity and was good friends with him — as I am always in equally short a time with all dogs, savage and gentle — before the buxom servant girl came to answer my summons.

The parson was at home, so I presented my card and was ushered into a parlor to the right hand, which looked into the garden. I had not waited long before he presented himself in his own proper person, like a proper person as he was; for he was certainly unlike anybody else of my acquaintance, at least. He was a tall, thin, cadaverous-looking man, not without intelligence, but with an eye as cold as death in his head, and a mouth made of Calvinistic iron, the lips of which were those of a satyr. The impression he made upon me was singularly unpleasant and revolting, as if I had got into the presence of some great malefactor; for I felt there was brain enough there, under that broad, low forehead, to plot and execute much. I had business with him, however, and it was no business of mine how he looked. But Violet to be under the ward of such a man! O heavens! there was a good deal of bitter soot in that thought, and it nearly choked me. I mustered my courage and self-command nevertheless, and thus addressed him:

"You do not remember me, sir, I see. And it would be a wonder if you did, for the last time I had the honor of addressing you, I was as wet as a drowned rat."

"You are pleased to be facetious, sir, this morning. But perhaps you will favor me by being more explicit. I am not aware that I ever saw you before."

"Very likely, sir. Indeed, it is most likely; for our introduction was a very short and a very cold one; although, if I remember rightly, you were good enough to invite me to call and see you, notwithstanding."

"I beg your pardon, sir; but really I don't understand your pleasantry. Will you do me the favor to tell me plainly to what I may attribute the honor of this visit."

"To our cold meeting and your own invitation, sir. Do you not remember how a stranger jumped into the water the other day, off Robin Lithe's Cave, after a young lady who fell overboard?"

"O, ay! Yes, indeed! Glad to see you, sir. You are the gentleman, no doubt, who did us such good service."

"I was very glad to be of use, I assure you, sir, when so beautiful

an argosy was afloat without helm or pilot, and I trust the young lady is no worse for the accident."

"The Lord be praised! no, sir. She very soon recovered, and is now quite well. But I fear she will be too much engaged to see you this morning."

"I will spare, sir, both you and the lady all trouble in that respect, for I am too well acquainted with the ways of life to expect any one should put himself out of his ordinary course to be courteous even, much less to make any show of gratitude. I beg to assure you, therefore, that I did not come here to see the lady, but to talk to you."

"But, sir, I am not the lady's guardian. I cannot talk to you about her. Besides, I do not know who you are. Perhaps, sir, you will be good enough to inform me."

"My card, sir, bore my name, or at least it should have done so, for I paid the engraver for cutting it. So you know my name, at least, and my office, which is the highest literary office Yorkshire can bestow at present upon any man; and this should assure you, at all events, that though I saved the lady's life, I am at least respectable, for I do not come to you without my vouchers. For the rest —"

"Yes, sir — the rest! as to your means! You will pardon me for being so plain and urgent."

"Certainly. I am a man of a thousand a year."

"Dear me, sir! why did you not say so before? My relative — the young lady, sir — is also a person of property, although she does not come into her estate in full for two years. Her rent-roll will then be a clear one thousand eight hundred a year."

"But, sir," said I with real anger in my voice and gestures, "you mistake me. I do not come here to talk with you about the young lady, — much less to consult with you about making her my wife. I came, as I said, to talk with you, but upon quite a different business; although the commonest politeness — as I understand politeness — would surely urge and justify me in inquiring after the health of a lady whom I had had the good fortune to save from drowning."

"Indeed, sir! Ah, ah! I begin to see that I may, perhaps, have misunderstood you. Pray proceed!"

"You have grievously (and I thought, vulgarly) misunderstood me. I came to talk with you about the condition of the fishermen in your parish, and to ask you if you thought any means could be adopted to serve them."

"Upon my word, sir, you are too good! I see you are universally philanthropic. A young lady or a whole parish of fishermen! it is all one to you. But allow me to say, sir, that I never tolerate meddlers in my parish affairs."

"I am not a meddler, sir; nor do I wish to interfere with any functions exclusively yours by law or courtesy. And when I spoke about serving the fishermen, I did not mean anything in the preaching line; for I 'm not in holy orders, and don't intend to be, as long as I can keep my wits sound; for I 'm very indifferently good, and don't want to become worse by playing the hypocrite in canonicals."

"Upon my word, sir, you use much freedom in your speech; and I do not know precisely what to make of you."

"I don't think you do, sir, and the longer you know me the more puzzled you would be in that respect. And as to my freedom of speech, why I am a free man in free England, and stand by my right to speak freely. And I perceive that you also know how to use your tongue, and are no respecter of the delicacies of behavior and feeling even when the person you speak to is a stranger."

"I meant no offence to you, sir, I assure you, in what I said. But I am jealous of my parish, and dread the introduction of heresies into it. And to speak truth, I feared you had some other design when you spoke about serving the fishermen."

"But would it not have been more decorous and well-bred in you, sir, to have inquired of me first if such was really my intention? I am doubtless heretic enough; but not in the way your suspicions pointed. And to avoid misunderstanding for the future, I will tell you clearly what my business with you is. I learn that there is no school in Flamboro' where the grown-up men can learn to read, write, and sum, — and that there is no public nor private library — even of the humblest sort — for the instruction of those who are able to read in the village. And as it is a part of my business to aid in founding such institutions, I thought I would consult with you, the clergyman of the parish, as to the best mode of doing this necessary and important work."

"But, sir, I do not think it either necessary or important that this work should be done at all. The men don't complain, and they get on as well as their fathers did before them. What do they want with reading and writing and summing, or with your preposterous idea of a library? I have the heresy of Methodism in the parish already; and I don't want any more wickedness to contend with. This gives me trouble enough, I assure you."

"And do you call learning to read and write wickedness?" I asked, in unfeigned astonishment.

"I find, sir, that education amongst the poor, in these rural districts, invariably leads to wickedness and insubordination. The farmer's boy thinks he knows as much as the clergyman; and what he does know fosters his self-conceit, until he finally leaves the church and goes over to the Methodists, where his conceit has abundant room to show itself at prayer-meetings, class-meetings, and even in the pulpit; for it does not stop at this blasphemy and sin against the Holy Ghost. And I find that the young women are demoralized by it, making bad servants, and taking to loose, depraved ways, in consequence of it. A little learning is a dangerous thing, sir, in spite of the declamation of the educationalists. A servant girl who can read and write and "count" as far as addition, is above her work, and wants fine clothes, which she will have, no matter at what cost to her body and soul; and even the farmers' sons and daughters, and the old people themselves, are infected by this poison of 'learning,' and are no longer the plain, honest folk they used to be when the girls' learning consisted in knowing how to spin their marriage sheets, and in doing the comfortable housework; and the young men's, in attending the cows and sheep and pigs, and in ploughing, sowing, and reaping. What I find so bad, therefore, sir, in all villages and hamlets where it obtains I am not likely to sanction in my own parish. Education is for gentlemen, not for the common people, who only use it against the Church, and to the destruction of their immortal souls."

"You amaze me, sir! I've heard much queer talk in my life; but yours is altogether alien, outlandish, barbaric! and the only blasphemy I ever heard any one deliberately utter against God and man. That you are in earnest I cannot doubt, and I respect you for your candor, although I loathe your sentiments with inconceivable loathing; and it is clear that we are not going to educate the poor fishermen together, at all events. I cannot of course ask you, after what you have said, to aid me in the work I propose to do, and I do not value your opposition at so high a rate as to request you not to oppose me. For I am sure your parishioners cannot love you nor esteem you; and they will not, therefore, be guided by you against their own inclination. I think we now understand each other, sir."

"We have used pretty plain speech between us, and ought to understand each other certainly. But I am not accustomed to be

abused in my own house, sir, and I must beg you to allow me to ring for a servant to show you the door!"

With that my mediæval parson rang the bell. "You are too polite, sir," said I, taking my hat and bowing to the haughty saint. "Would you not like to use your foot as well? I see more of the devil in you just now than you dare express either in words or actions. If you were a brave man now, instead of a miserable saint, you would show me the door yourself, and follow me on to the common or behind the castle walls, where no tell-tale Methodist or heretic could see us, and permit me to chastise you for this mean insult. What say you, sir?" I added, as the servant-man entered the room; "will you follow me and bring your man to act as second to you? Or are you the miserable coward that I take you for!"

The parson grew pale as a corpse at this unexpected challenge in the presence of his servant, for it completely turned the tables upon his dignity, and made his subsequent order — "Show this man the door, John!" — supremely ridiculous. John stood stock still, with the handle of the door between his fingers, and neither spoke nor moved. He did n't know what to do, he was so utterly confounded. The impotent parson bit his nether lip and played with his white pocket-handkerchief, not daring to repeat his order to John to "show this man the door." And I was wicked enough to linger where I was and enjoy the fun. At last I walked leisurely to the door, and said, as I made my exit: "Well, then, I wish you good day, sir, and I hope you will pray to God that it may please him to mend your manners, enlighten your darkness, and give you a new pluck, for the honor of poor human nature, which you despise. Amen!"

I reached the garden-gate, and was about to pass out of the bounds of this venerable rectory, when I heard a voice calling aloud: "Sir! sir! oh! sir! stop, pray stop!" and looking back I saw Violet, to my great joy, running after me down the gravel walk, her cheeks flushed with excitement, and her beautiful hair blowing about her face and neck in enchanting disorder. I took off my hat as she came up to me, and waited for an explanation.

"Dear Sir!" she said, holding out her fair white hand, which I seized with avidity, "I was sure it was you. I knew it was you; for I heard your voice as I was passing the sitting-room, where you were talking with Mr. Grimes. But what has happened. O, tell me what has happened! for John says there have been high words between you and the rector, and that he was ordered to show you the door!"

"It is quite true, my dear young lady," said I; "and I do not think the rector has much to boast of in offering to me so poor an insult."

"Indeed, he has not, sir, and so I will tell him when I see him. How dare he do it, the proud, insolent priest! And to you, sir, to whom I owe my life! It was base and cruel of him; and he shall soon learn how I despise him for it. O, sir," she continued, with such a sweet earnestness that I was deeply moved by it, "if this place had been my own beautiful home in Sherwood Forest, you would have had a very different reception; and I must beg of you, nay, I will insist upon your paying me a visit there as soon as possible, that I may wipe out this foul disgrace. You will come, dear sir, will you not?"

"Indeed, lady, I could refuse you nothing, much less a promise it gives me so much pleasure to make. It is very kind of you to ask me, and your frank and beautiful manner delights me so much, that I cannot help loving you, and profoundly respecting you also."

"O, no, that is too much," she replied blushing. "I could not do less than invite my benefactor to my own home, after he has been so ill used here. I will return as soon as my convenience will allow me, and I hope you will soon fulfil your promise. When may I expect you?"

"I cannot fix upon any precise time at present," I replied, "for I have imperative engagements here at Flamboro', and may be detained some days."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed, with evident pleasure, and then suddenly checking herself, she added, "how unfortunate that I have no home here to offer you whilst you stay."

"I pray you, my dear lady, do not let that disturb you in the least. I am used to live at inns, and my present quarters at the Golden Lion are comfortable enough."

"Yes, I have no doubt of that; but I cannot see you there, and I want very much to be with you and talk with you, and prove to you in so many ways how grateful I am to you."

"I need no proof, thou guileless and beautiful maiden! I see all you would say in the clear azure of your eyes. But I confess that I also long to talk with you, and change thoughts and feelings and sympathies with you, and above all things to have you for my dearest friend."

"How kind of you to say so! I will gladly be your dearest friend,— very, very gladly! For I have no friend; and I feel that you would be a friend to me; would you not?"

"I would try to be such through all my life; but I fear I should never be worthy of one so good and lovely as you are."

"You must not flatter me, dear friend, for I am but a frail girl, and too many good things said of me might turn my head and make me vain and foolish, which of all things I most wish not to be."

"And which you never will be," said I earnestly. "Nor did I mean to flatter you, I assure you. I merely spoke what I felt and still feel."

"Then that is right. I always speak what I think and feel, and I know it is right to do so; although my excellent aunt, and the fine people with whom we visit, think it is wrong. But they are all conventional, and belong to the world and what is called society, so I don't mind what they say, for I belong only to the soul."

I was cheered and astonished at this fresh and genuine speech, which burst upon me like a new sunrise, and was so utterly unlike anything I had ever heard before from the lips of a woman. I replied with equal frankness, and told her how deeply I was affected by her sentiments.

"You give me back myself," I added, "by what you say; for I sympathize with you entirely, and believe in you as in my own consciousness. We must contrive, lady, to see each other as much as possible, whilst I stay here. I have to arrange now for a meeting of the fishermen this evening, for I am going to try to get them all to attend an evening school, where they may learn to read and write and sum; and this is my business here during the next day or two; but if I do not ask too much, I should be delighted if you will allow me to accompany you in a walk over the heath this morning, as soon as I have made my arrangements."

"O, I shall be only too happy to walk with you. Will you please name the hour?"

"I shall be at liberty at noon, and at your service, lady, any hour from that time until you please to dismiss me."

"Then let the hour be noon, dear sir. I will not detain you any longer now, although I wish to know more of your plans respecting the fishermen, and I am sure they will be good for them, so I hope they will succeed. Until then, good by, dear friend! I will be ready here, at the gate, when you come for me."

So saying, she again placed her soft, white hand in mine, and ran back to the rectory, whilst I returned, thoughtful and agitated, to the Golden Lion.

I had no time to lose, otherwise I should have indulged in a feast

of meditation over these romantic adventures. So I rang the bell, and in a few moments the landlord answered it by politely inquiring of me, "Wat do ye whant?"

To which I replied as curtly, "I want the parish bellman." When he—to use the Miltonic method of connecting the machinery of dialogue—"T' parish bellman doant live at the sign of the Gouden Lion; an' if yer whants him, yer may seek him yoursen."

Thus delivering himself, he vanished, banging the door after him with peculiar insolence and violence. At the same moment the schoolmaster was passing by the window, so I rattled at the panes with my knuckles, and hailed him into the room.

"Good Mr. Snorra," quoth I, "I am glad to see you this morning, for I want a man to speak to who will be civil and obliging, and not bully me when I ask him a question or tell him my necessity, like your wild hog of a landlord. Are you disposed, Mr. Snorra, to exchange words with me upon these terms?"

"Sartunlee, sur, I be. An' devil take t' landlord, who 's bin at his tricks agin wi' yer, I be sworn, sur, beant he? Dom him, if we chaps don't sarve him out t' neet, my name 's not Snorra. Ne'er mind him, sur, howsumdiver, but tell I wat it is yer whants, an' if it lays i' my power to do 't, yer may reckon on 't as done."

"Thank you, Mr. Snorra. In the first place, I want to make sure of the Methodist school-room for our meeting to-night, because I find the parson is a 'queer chap,' as you said he was, and that no help is to be expected from him; and in the second place, I want the bellman to go round the village and cry the meeting."

"Yer may be sure of the Methodist place, sur, and I 'se not surprisen you found the parson a queer un. So I 'se note to do but fetch Nab Draffer, the bellman, right away."

"Be as quick, then, as you can, good friend, for my time is precious this morning."

"I sall be back direckelty, sur; he doant live aboon a stane's fling fra here," said Mr. Snorra, as he promptly left the room.

He soon returned with the crier, a stout, tunbellied man, who wore a cocked hat and a blue frock coat, adorned with brass buttons as large as Mexican dollars. He carried his bell, which was rusty from long service and lack of elbow grease, by the clapper, the handle pointing significantly downwards.

"Have you got good lungs, Nab Draffer?" said I, as the important man came up to the table where I was sitting. "I want you to cry a meeting of the fishermen to-night at eight o'clock, to be held

in the Methodist school-room. And you must tell the people that the parson says they are not fit to be trusted to learn to read and write and sum, for fear they should all turn Methodists and take to bad ways. You must wrap it up, Nab Draffer, in your own lingo, and if you do it well I shall pay you double wages. Are you free, able, and willing to do this service to the commonwealth of Flamboro'?"

"Nubbudy more so, sur," said Nat. "I knows the parson, sur, afore to-day, and bad 's the best on him. Eight o'clock, sur, you said, did n't yer?"

"Yes, eight 's the hour. You will be there, Mr. Snorra, I suppose?"

"Sartenlee, sur, an' so will Nat here, an' Polly Dradda's son — what 's jist cumed back fra the Ingies."

"What, the man who stuffed the birds in Polly's glass case?" said I, a good deal surprised and interested.

"The varry mon, sur; he cumed hame yesternoon, though t' ode 'oman kept it varry squat."

"Well, I shall be glad to see him and all of you. So good morning."

And my pair of presentibles left the room. And now for Violet, thought I; dear Violet, who waits for me like a sunbeam at the garden gate, fulfilling her own destiny and mine, in such beautiful unconsciousness. I took my hat and gloves, and went out into the noonday air to meet her. My heart pained me with the exquisite music of its beatings as I walked along; and I seemed to diffuse like an omnipresence through the balmy atmosphere and the blue heavens, and the Syrian sunlight, and to be all things, and contain all things in my own illimitable existence. The little girl waiting for me at the garden gate had power enough to produce so marvellous a recreation in me as that; and who can tell by what means, and how? Sensations that were altogether new to me; feelings, aspirations, sympathies unknown before; most unexpected, but as I now felt them most beautiful, befitting, and natural, took entire possession of me. Happiness I had known before, and joy; and the bliss of lying on a dear bosom, and kissing dear lips, and thrilling with unspeakable ecstasies beneath the folding embraces of white, warm, and loving arms. And I knew the electric touch of a dark maiden's hair upon my cheek, and the suddenly awakening passion which it produced, — taking shape in fiery sunbursts of poetic words; in passionate gazes through which the soul seemed pouring out all

the floods of its immortality; in sighs, entreaties, caresses, and unspeakable minglings of being, — and I had thought all this tropical pomp, this floral redundance of passion the highest and best of love. But now I knew that, although this was good experience and worth living for, it was after all vulgar and initial, and that the new experience I felt this morning was of that sort which lies behind the veil, where the sacred beatitudes of love, the true givers of immortal life and blessedness, reside. He who said "I am God in Nature," felt then what I felt now, so pervading and creative I was. And when I approached the rectory and saw my beloved one at the gate waiting for me, as she had promised, my whole soul went out to meet her. Her hand was once more in mine, and we looked into each other's eyes, and our souls were satisfied that they were sent here for each other.

"Which way shall we walk, lady?" I asked, descending from these transcendental regions and putting myself into mundane speech, with a facility which astonished me, — the sound of my own voice grating harshly too on my ears.

"Which ever way you like, sir," she replied; "but if you have no choice, we will walk over my favorite heath."

"Certainly," said I; and in a few minutes our feet were amongst the heather blossoms.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOVE PASSAGES WITH VIOLET. — A DISSERTATION ON LOVE.

"I HAVE had a battle with the rector," she said, "on account of his conduct to you; but no artillery of mine can shame him. I told him I should quit his roof as soon as I could, — and that I was going to walk with you this morning, in hope of making some amends for his ill-breeding."

"I thank you much for honoring me with your company," I replied, "and I value it too highly to desecrate it with any more conversation about this man, — if you will allow me to say so, without thinking me rude," I added, smiling.

"No, indeed; there is no rudeness in it. I have made up my mind how to act in respect to him, and shall gladly forget so disagreeable a subject. I must tell you, however, that he tried to persuade me not to walk with you; called it unmaidenly, imprudent, and many other naughty things. I laughed at him, however, and told him I was going to my own, which he did not at all understand. And here I am."

"I cannot tell you the joy your words and confidence give me, dear lady. But when you said you were 'going to your own,' what did you mean by it? Am I, indeed, 'your own'?"

"Yes; for I seem to have found in you something I had long lost. I knew when I first saw you, as I lay half drowned in the boat that day, that we should meet again, and that we should suit each other well, and become very dear friends. And this morning I felt that I belonged to you, and you to me, so here we are together."

"I would that we were going to be together always, thou dear one! For I am born into a new life by your influence, and seem to breathe the very breath of heaven!"

"How I thank God, then, that he made me!" she replied, with genuine, enthusiastic earnestness, and profound simplicity.

"And I also thank God devoutly," said I, "for so beautiful a gift to creation, so divine a treasure to me. Do you not perceive, O my beloved! how your presence gladdens and brightens all things?

How the purple of the heather deepens, and the gold of the gorse blossoms burns with unwonted fire! and what a clear, divine melody there is in the songs of these upsoaring larks! And what an unspeakable glory swims over the face of earth and sky! Do you not see all this? And yet this was not so yesterday. It is through you, and by you that this transfiguration has come to pass."

"Say, rather, it is through you, dear friend. For I see and feel as you do; and yet this was not so with me yesterday. How strange and wonderful it is! How does it happen? And will it continue,—O, will it continue?"

"I was just asking myself the same question; and I think it will, so long as we feel as we now do."

"Let us pray, then, that we may always feel so; for I would not lose this new beauty, and the meaning it hides, and the voices that speak through it, for a thousand worlds."

"Nor I, dearest. But what is this which we two—so nearly strangers to one another—*feel*, that it should so suddenly and miraculously change the aspect and coloring of nature to us? What secret do we possess that the vulgar world knows not of? Are we special favorites of Heaven, or have others before us—our own brothers and sisters—experienced the same feelings, think you?"

"I do not know, dear friend. I never heard of any one who did; and I do not know what to call the feeling; but it is very beautiful, and nestles in the heart like an angel."

"O, believe, dear one, that it *is* an angel, and keep it close to your heart forever. For if you once suffer it to depart, it will never return; or if it should, you would not know it again, its wings would be so soiled and shattered."

"Never fear that I shall let it go, dear friend; I love it too well for that. But you talk as if you knew all about it, and could tell me what it is, and whence it comes. Pray, do if you can."

"Indeed, I know no more about it than you do, dearest, although I feel its wings fluttering at my heart also. This, however, I do know, that it *is* an angel, and that the angel does it all."

"It is very good of God, then, to send such an angel to us, and I bless him for it."

"And can you find no name for the dear angel? O thou dearer and sweeter angel!"

"I do not think I shall try to. It will make no difference what we call it. It will still be the same angel after all."

"Let us call it *love*, then, for that is the most beautiful of all names."

"Indeed it is, — as flowers are the most beautiful things of earth; and when God made flowers, he must have had most beautiful and loving thoughts. Don't you think so? O, how I love God for flowers, which are the very aroma of His love, and always make me feel when I kiss them and rock them to sleep in my bosom, that I have met them before in some other life, and that they were not always flowers, such as we know them now."

"Perhaps that dream is true, my beautiful-souled sister? Perhaps you had another life before this — who knows?"

"Who knows?" she repeated, wonderingly; and then, "we who know so little, cannot circumscribe life and the forms of life. If the soul be immortal, it may have had millions of incarnations, and may yet have millions more, — and why not glimmerings, nay, whole revelations of its past consciousness in every fresh incarnation?"

"That is the Platonic doctrine, — did you ever read Plato?"

"No, — but I intend it shortly, as soon as I have finished some books I am now reading."

"Then you have found Plato's doctrine in your own soul, which proves, I think, the truth of it. But come, now, dearest, and sit down here on this knoll of heather, and tell me whether you have ever thought of love, about which we have spoken so much this morning."

So saying, I led her to the bank, and half sat, half reclined beside her, her little hand like an unblown white lily in mine, and my eyes looking into her eyes. At this moment a singular incident occurred, — a butterfly, precisely similar to that which led to my first acquaintance with this lovely girl, flew towards us, and presently alighted upon her dress. We both started at the same instant, and uttered an involuntary exclamation. Then our eyes met again, and as the pretty insect flew away, she said with evident emotion, gazing still more intently upon me:

"How very strange! It seems to me like a dream; and yet surely I have met you here before on this very heath, and you gave me a butterfly, the very image of that which has just flown away. You were then a gypsy youth, and talked to me about the stars and your sister Myra, who could tell fortunes by them, and I promised to go to her to have my fortune told, and then fluttered away after more butterflies."

Here was a fix; a dead stop put suddenly and without warning upon my love passages, and all that I had intended to draw out of her respecting the divine passion. I had no doubt that she had pen-

etrated my secret through the sign-fugitive of that impertinent fellow with the gauze wings, — and, as she had shown herself so thoroughly open and candid in all her thoughts and ways to me, I was not certain how she might regard my gypsy disguise, and the trick I had played her in it. I winced, therefore, not a little, as the reader may suppose, under the point blank fire of her close batteries; but I put the best face on it I could, and exclaimed:

"I a gypsy! I gave you a butterfly! What do you mean, dearest?"

"O," she replied, "I knew it could not be; but yet it is so strange; and pardon me if I say that you are very like the young gypsy."

I breathed freer than before, and replied: "Am I indeed? Then he has not much to boast of in the way of looks, at all events; and I am glad he showed his good disposition by presenting you with the gaudy insect."

"O, he was very good-natured, I assure you; and I quite liked the lad; he seemed one of the better sort of gypsies, as if he had lived in towns, and caught some of the manners which obtain there."

Ho! ho! thought I. A fine gypsy you are, Master Geordie! to be found out as a player by the first pair of eyes that takes a passing interest in you! Where be your conceits now, Master Geordie? You, who prided yourself upon your Rommany airs, and your Norman and Celtic blood, — half persuading yourself that you were a gypsy born and not made, as Horace says is the case with poets. I hid my chagrin, however, and asked her to relate the circumstances of the adventure, which she did to the nicest peculiarities.

"And did you go to the tents to have your fortune told?" I asked, when she had concluded her narration about the butterfly.

"Yes," she replied, "and I was much startled at what I heard; and very deeply impressed by the beauty and manner of the gypsy girl who acted as Pythoness on the occasion. I was pained to see, too, that she was suffering in the throes of a great agony all the while she spoke to me; and I would gladly have comforted her if I could only have won her confidence."

"That you would, I am sure; and you might well wonder what ailed the gypsy girl; but may I ask you what she said to you? Did she prophesy good or bad fortune for you?"

"Don't you know? It seems to me that you know it well enough, and I cannot get this incomprehensible idea out of my mind. I know it is impossible you should, — but I cannot rid myself of the infatua-

tion that you are acquainted with it. Is it not strange? What has come over me to-day, I wonder?"

"It is indeed strange, dearest lady," said I, laughing; "but tell me what the pretty gypsy said to you, if the words may be revealed to profane ears without profanity."

"She told me that some one of whom I knew nothing, or next to nothing, loved me, watched over me, served me, and would continue to serve me, and that we were destined for each other."

"Surely not," said I; "I have known you a very short time, it is true, although I seem to have known you through all eternity; but I cannot part with you now; you who are my very life and soul, and have shown me a new existence, and new, infinite possibilities of existence. Would that I were the favored one of the prophecy."

"And so you are, dearest friend. I feel that you are, and I know that it cannot be otherwise."

"O sweet, sweet words! But do you not deceive yourself and me, my beautiful, my own dearest darling? How do you so surely know that I am the destined happy lover?"

"I only know it, as I said, because I feel it. I have perfect faith in the assurances of my own soul; although you do not correspond with what the gypsy said about my unknown lover. She described him as hiding in the holes of the earth, or something to that effect; and you do not hide in such places, you know, dear friend, but walk abroad, and look heaven in the face as is befitting a man. I know I interpret the prophecy aright for all that. For I feel that we are one already."

"And is it possible," said I, "that you, dearest, who are so good and pure and beautiful, will accept my love, and love me also in return? What am I that heaven should thus stoop to me, and crown me with her regal stars? And now I see that love is the cause and the master of all things, terrene and superneal, and that nothing is or can be without love."

"Look at me!" she said, when I had uttered these words. "Look into my eyes, dearest friend; these blue-orbed windows of my soul, and read there in cipher all you have now spoken. O, how wonderful is love! What is he not capable of who loves! What secrets, most divine, most holy, most near to God's own heart, can hide from him? Who dare speak of immortality that has not known love? Who and what is immortal besides love?"

She ceased speaking, and we both sat silent for a long time, entranced in thought, and the glory of this new life. At length she said:

"Let us talk again of this great and divine essence which is called love. All other things are tame and dead to me to-day but this alone. O, that this love, and its beautiful illuminations, its powers and faculties, to which there seems no beginning and no end, would indeed last forever, and float us at each successive audible summons of God, from pinnacle to pinnacle, from battlement to battlement, through all the gulfs of eternity, upward and onward, forever and forever."

I would gladly have spoken of love, loving her as I did, but I had nothing more to say. I preferred the white heat to the smoke; but I had a book in my pocket which contained some oracular words concerning it, and I asked the lovely girl to allow me to read to her instead. She willingly acquiesced, and I drew her close to my side, and began: —

"'That a man should live in the world without love is neither good nor profitable; for love is as necessary for the full development and maturity of man as sunshine is to corn, fruits, and flowers. It is the innermost depths of existence; and the source of all true fruition, not only in the physical, but spiritual life. As the warm kisses of the sun quicken the beautiful bosom of Nature into violet births, and the blossoming foliage of woods and orchards, so do the glances of vestal eyes awaken the soul of man to the hidden wonders of being, and fill his heart with ecstasies and infinite yearnings. We have all felt its power, and partaken of its baptisms and holy sacraments; but we have not made the most of this divine visitation, nor entered into the depths of its wisdom and admonishment. For love has a higher mission than that of binding two hearts together. But no one can call to mind his early feelings under the influence of this passion without confessing that he then lived for the first time, his whole soul vibrating to all earthly and heavenly sympathies. And since love has so supreme and beneficent a power over us, we are thereby warned that it is the true element of life, in which a man can alone grow.

"'In the mean while Nature, who will not have her young children prematurely wise, begins her first training of them in the mysteries of love, by means of beautiful bodies and organs. These she arrays with all the flowers and vermeils of poesy, and then, with jealous cunning, leaves the natural instincts to their mutual attractions.

"'In the first May morning of love, when the young man goes forth alone to rejoice over the beauty of his chosen maid, — revelling in the bliss of his own rapturous emotions, — what a divine enchantment seems to rest upon the face of the earth, and what won-

derful recollections come over him, like the visions of a forgotten experience! He is entranced amid the witcheries of a new existence which is not new to him, but old as an eternal life. So high is his beatitude that he is too great for speech, and the silence of eternity seems not large enough for the fruition of his ecstasy. He wanders amongst the trees at midnight, and hears angel voices calling to him out of the winds and clouds. He thrills with the pain of unutterable melody, and at last, all his glorious visions and illuminations find embodiment in song.

"'For love is the essential harmony of the human soul with that of Nature; and this is the reason why the lover writes in numbers, and speaks of his beloved in metaphors. Indeed, all high thoughts, and pure, deep emotions refuse to be expressed in any other but tuneful language. And seeing that love carries a man upward so near to God, we need not wonder that the eyes of Nature shine with such lustrous meaning through the fantasy of the lover. For love is the key to all truth and mystery, and unlocks the kingdom of the invisible world. It is the voice likewise, which speaks through all oracles; the only voice that lives for ever and ever; because it is the utterance of that divine harmony I have spoken of, out of which truth and beauty are born.

"'Thus the very commencement of the lover's experience is prophetic of his ultimate destiny. He does not disturb himself, however, with any occult inquiries into the nature of his emotions, but cherishes them with thankfulness and pious joy. His love is a religion, and not a philosophy; and she who has awakened the celestial light within him is the Holy Virgin of his idolatry. She attends him in his daily walks, and the thought of her charms all the sorrow from the stars, and makes the night holy. Nature everywhere speaks to him in symbols of his beloved; and the running brook, the shadowy moonshine, the flowers, the grass, and the trees are the living celebration of his love. He knows not by what invisible magic he and Nature have come so truly to understand and interpret each other; and yet he feels that his position is not strained, but true and natural.'"

"And is it not true, dear friend, this and all you have read?" said Violet, interrupting me. "Do we not ourselves know it to be true? Surely this writing came from the heart of a man and a lover. But go on, if you have any more to read."

"Yes," I replied, "it is true enough, and I like to hear about love also to-day; for you, dearest, have woke the 'celestial light' within me, and I am unspeakably happy. The writer continues:—

"'There is no escaping the necromancy of love. In one form or other she captures us unawares, and puts us in a prison of ravishment. And although few persons know love in her highest moods, yet her presence is felt alike in the cottage and the palace, and no liberty is so sweet as the bondage she imposes. She adapts herself to all natures, and will not lose one inch of her sovereignty. She comes to the gentle girl and the passionate woman and the strong, rude man alike; and so silent is her entrance that until we feel her lying upon our hearts we know not of her presence. It is strange how this wondrous, invisible love exalts and beautifies the race. No person is insignificant, no thing or creature mean and low, when regarded through love's golden and colored medium. For love, like light, is the beneficent artist that endows and ennobles all it touches.

"'Love's language is fit for no other ears than those of the lover; for love is its own interpreter of that divine harmony which it hath and is; and he who loves not would misunderstand its meaning. I will not, therefore, play the part of the spy and the traitor, but content myself with affirming the lover's true nobility. He is of all men nearest to the heart of nature and the truth of existence. For love's overshadowings generate within the soul all goodness and generosity, and make a man feel so like a god that he desires nothing so much as a god's attributes, that he may become infinitely beneficent. It is the highest achievement and ultimate aim of love to fill us with great emotions and godlike thoughts and deeds; and that is not love, but mere fiery instinct, which falls short of this. Love alone is capable of making earth a paradise, and of restoring humanity to its ideal. Men and women mutually believing in the ideal of life, and loving the ideal more than the ripe human beauty in each other, would take the world captive by their example and mystic influence. If this appear visionary, it is because no man or woman has yet been found of a nature large and pure enough to embody it. We must rise from the contemplation of *beautiful forms*, if we would faithfully follow love in its highest teaching, to the study and reverence of *beautiful natures*. It is only when virtue and purity, and the nameless moral graces of woman shine through the apparition of her beauty, that we feel how strong a hold love gives us of the eternal verities.

"'And here we find the basis of all true marriage unions. We are attracted first of all by beautiful persons, and soon discover that all persons are evanescent, and that virtue, which is alone beautiful,

is alone eternal. Hence the stability which marriage gives to society and human life. For now that love's raptures are ended, comes the quiet reign of happiness and duty. Let the lover marry, therefore, and be a lover still. So much is involved in this injunction, that a man had better never have been, than marry and cease to love. For man and woman are God's highest indwelling temples, and his presence is never more gloriously manifested than in truthful and loving hearts. These visions of the sacredness of beauty which come over us in the first love of youth, should ripen into real convictions as we grow up with years.

"'And do thou, O woman! have faith in thyself and the high purposes of thy existence. Believe that thou art here to exalt man by thy beauty and chastity; to ennoble him by thy love; to cheer him by thy kindness and smiles and sympathy; to soften him by thy tenderness, and assist him by thy counsels. Thou art the mother of men! and shalt stand in no other relationship with man, save that of the true and pure wife.

"'And thus we are led on by beautiful forms to the contemplation of beauty itself; and to this consummation tend all the early and mediatorial delights of love. As the autumnal fruit of reason ripens within us, we come to venerate the symbol less, and begin a new May time of immortal love for the truth which it represents. And thus those deep emotions and tempestuous passions which the sweet virginhood of woman awakens within us are but the first agitations of that deep, infinite existence which, after many storms and conflicts, settles into calm serenity, and merges at last into the being of God. For when we are thus enfranchised from the dominion of matter and form, and stand triumphant in the region of the ideal, we see that truth and duty are alone divine; and that the secret cunning of nature in arraying the sexes in such wondrous garments of beauty, was not only to facilitate her own ends in their creation, but to quicken them with divine insights, and develop them for the highest spiritual conquests.'"

I closed the book, and laid it upon the heather, which seemed to have an affection for it, taking it lovingly down amongst its purple blossoms, — as a maiden the dear one's head upon her bosom. "And how do you like this rhapsody, dearest?" said I. "Is it true, think you, that beauty is but the symbol of the divine? Is not beauty divine in itself, — the ultimate divine idea, beyond which there is no consciousness?"

"O, beauty is divine, no doubt," she exclaimed with ardor; "it

would be profanity to think or speak of it as anything short of that. But it is surely symbolical of something diviner than itself; or why is it so suggestive, — so recreative to the intellect; so prolific of virtue and goodness to the soul? I am not learned in the world's theories of beauty, and from what the book says of them I do not wish to be; but it seems to me that no one can be mean or bad, or anything but noble and godlike, in the presence of a supreme beauty, whether it appear in a good man or woman, — a heroic deed; in art; or in the portraitures of nature. I believe what the book says is true."

"And I, looking at thee, O my beloved! can believe in nothing more divine than beauty. Do I not see heaven, and all good and beautiful things, in your eyes? radiate from your person? your thoughts? and is not your voice to me a divine music? And does not your beauty enfold them all?"

"I would I were so beautiful, dear friend, as you say. Indeed, I am not. But I wish to be beautiful to you. It is something to live for, and be grateful for; to rejoice in as a new element and power of life. I hope you will always think me beautiful, and I will try to become so. Nay, I will live so close to God and you, that I must become so."

"O," I exclaimed, interrupting her, "you must not try to be better or more beautiful than you are; or you will grow clean out of my sphere, into an astronomy which I dare not attempt to follow; and so I shall lose you forever. Let me keep you, dearest, where you are at present, at all events. I am very human and you are very beautiful. Shall I repeat to you some lines which suggest themselves to me just now? I know you will think them very profane after our high converse, but they are already on my tongue. Shall I utter them?"

"O yes," said she, smiling with a sweetness that outrivalled the sweetness of June. "Pray repeat them. I will pardon the profanity."

So I, looking into her sweet face, and feeling the light of her eyes — her blue eyes, like Carpathian violets — in my heart and soul, begun to repeat them:

"There is no coronal, nor crown,
No jewel worthy of thy brow,
And all the stars of heaven look down
In love, as I am looking now,
On thy dear eyes like violets blown.

"June flowers are not so full of sweet,
Nor heaven itself so full of love,
As thy sweet face where roses meet,
As thy warm heart, all hearts above,
Which broods o'er my heart like a dove.

"Thou art the beauty and the pride
Of all that love and life have wrought;
And thou shalt be my darling bride,
My queen, my soul, my life, my thought!
And sleep like sunshine by my side."

"There," said I, "those lines are for you, dearest, if you will accept them. I know they are not half good enough; nor do they express half what I mean and feel."

"But O, dear friend, I had never thought of being a bride," she exclaimed in the first rush of her feelings; and she added, "but that of course is not literally intended in the poem. It is the license of the rhyme, I suppose."

"No indeed, dearest, it is my literal meaning, — my hope, my dream, my prayer; and surely it will one day come to pass. May I not believe so, O my beautiful! may I not believe that our interchange of thought, feeling, and love, so sweetly rendered to each other this day, may hereafter complete itself by that closest of unions?"

"I cannot tell, dear friend; I do not know how to answer you. I had never thought of it, I was so happy. And it has come upon me at unawares. But I think it will be as you hope; for how can I ever part with you, now that I have found you, — you whom I have so long looked for, waited for? But there is time enough to think of this. We cannot be more than happy. Yes, to be blessed is more. And love only can make happiness grow into blessedness. So we will love on, dearest, and wait; shall we not?" she added, with such high innocence of soul, that, in the excitement and rapture and reverence of my feelings, I impulsively clasped her in my arms, and burying my face in her bosom, wept rainbows of glad tears.

We returned to the village; and I could tell much more that passed between us before we left the heather blossoms, and on our way back; but perhaps I have told too much already. For what is interesting to a lover is not so interesting to one who is not a lover. This I may tell, however, that we agreed to meet again on the following day.

CHAPTER XIX.

BIG TOON, MYRA, AND THE HEALING HAND. — FOUNDING THE FLAMBORO' VILLAGE LIBRARY. — THE PARSON AND MAD PAUL DRADDA.

WHEN I arrived at the Golden Lion, who should stand before me, "six foot in his breeches," but big Toon. He was not half big enough to hold my love for him, however. So I seized his outstretched shoulder-of-mutton fist, and thus accosted him: "Hallo! my tiny baby! Ishmael! My little tawny bantling, is that you? How comes it to pass that the good granny allows her picanini to wander so far away from her apron-strings this blessed afternoon, that is so near the evening? What 's up?"

"Trouble along o' the Healin' Hand, Master Geordie," said he, with a woful face; "an' I 've brought the words that cumed from the darkness out of her lips to speak to you."

"In God's name, then," I exclaimed, "come into the room, Ishmael, and let me hear them"; for I felt alarmed, and my heart beat audibly with unwonted perturbations! "What is it, Ishmael?" I asked, as we seated ourselves in the old oak chairs.

"It 's all along o' the Healin' Hand, Master Geordie; an' granny can't make it out, and niver seed the like, or heerd tell on 't afore; though she 's brewed the secret herbs, an' chalked the stars on her board to try and find it out. An' your pet Chi, Master Geordie, what loved you better nor all the tawnies, has bin asleep all the while sin' the moon o' yesternight, and there she lies now, the beauty! like a dead snowdrop," said Toon, his voice tremulous with emotion.

"Surely not, Ishmael; surely she 's not been sleeping all this while, since last night, and no sign of waking?"

"That 's jist it, Master Geordie. An' there 's the sorrow. Me and Nosey — who 's jist gone off to Lundon, poor chap! by the five train — tooked a peep at her as she laid so pale an' purty among the dainty woollies, wi' her hair tumbled about her, like black clouds about the moon when she 's still and white in the sky, and don't roll rollickin' about as I 've seed her do sumtimes, — an' the darlin' dearie

did n't seem to be alive, an' had no breath; an' her hands was stiff and cold. An' Nosey and me looked at one another, an' walked out o' the tent as if we was choked; an' I can feel a stone in my throat jist now, Master Geordie."

"Try if a quart of beer won't wash it down, Ishmael," said I, pulling the bell.

"No, no, Master Geordie," said he. "Beer won't wash the bowlder away that I feels. I does n't want the beer, Master Geordie. The voice of the little pet chi singing in the tents again, — the light of the dearie's black eye makin' the old tents sunny again, — nothin' but them 'll do it, Master Geordie."

"Brother," said I, "if my offer of the beer has wounded you, I hope you 'll forgive me. I love you, and all belonging to you, too well to say or do anything that would injure any of you, in any way. And be sure that I feel for you in your sorrow for our darling sister, and that I would this moment gladly give my life to help her, — if I could."

"I knows you would, brother," said the big, manly, honest fellow, with a big tear, hot, briny, and blinding in his eye, as he rose up on his giant shanks and shook me by the hand; "I knows you would, brother; an' don't go for to think that I 'se offended about the beer, brother. Not I that is, an' thank you, Master Geordie. But it ain't a beer case, you see, brother, this ere! though I did drink a quart or two over poor Tibby, as war n't a tawny, an' did n't die a nateral death, along o' your bull-dog, Master Geordie!"

"Well, then, you can drink or not, as you please, brother," said I, as the landlord brought the pot and set it on the table.

"I does n't despise the beer, brother," said Toon; "an' you knows that I takes to it in a general way, like a friend that I loves, an' gies it plenty o' bowel room; but I can't drink to-day, an' thank you, Master Geordie, for thinkin' o' the little chi so cold and still in the dainty woollies; the darlin' little chi! Master Geordie," he added, in a plaintive, wailing tone, lifting his face suddenly, and seeking my eyes for sympathy, which he surely found in them, for I was very unhappy on account of Myra, and felt all my love for her kindling again into a flame, which I did not seek to check.

"But the words from the darkness, Ishmael! what of them? Did n't you say you brought me words from the lips of the beautiful chi?"

"True, brother, words spoke in her sleep, when granny cumed back from the herb brewin' wi' the power of the stars upon her, an'

called the spirit of the sleepin' chi to say what it was that ailed it, and what would heal it."

"And what did the spirit say, brother?"

"That the bushnie with the Healin' Hand was to cum back to his little tawny sister, and the spirit would tell him what to do, brother."

"Well, Ishmael, I will come back to-night as soon as I can get away from the fishermen chaps, with whom I have an engagement this evening. Your news has made me sad about my sweet sister; and be sure I will go to her as soon and as fast as I can."

"Good, brother!" said he, rising; "I will away now to the tents wi' myself, and the better news I takes from you."

When the little infant was gone, I lit my pipe, and ordered tea to be served. I fell a musing upon these strange things of to-day; and soon began to wonder if I were awake or not; if I were two individuals, with two hearts and two souls; if it were possible for one person to love two persons at the same time, without fraud or the intention of fraud, or falsehood to either, — but in absolute good faith to both. Was there not something wrong in this, — some screw loose somewhere in the floors of my brain through which the insane moonlight glimmered, filling me with such shadows and fantasies? Now, it was Myra who ruled in my heavens; anon it was Violet! and I had no power over the sovereignty thus exercised over me.

Myra, full of warm life, was before me, enchanting me with her beauty, and drawing me close to her bosom by her love; and Violet, the innocent, high-brained, high-hearted, — to whom I had just plighted my soul, — the maiden of no disguise, no barriers, — the priceless maiden through whose blue eyes looked forth the serene immortality of love, — retreated from me to immeasurable distances, lost amid the glory of stars. And yet I loved them both, and did not feel myself a traitor to either of them. How was it? I knew not; could not understand nor explain it; but abandoned myself to the mood; moods being, as I have elsewhere called them, the "lunar tides of the soul," which come and go without our seeking, although by especial, wise ordinations for good, and not for evil purposes.

And then I thought of this strange sleep, — this strange mystic sleep, produced by the Healing Hand, as my brothers called it. What was that? Natural sleep it was not; trance it might be; and what if it were death? death held in thrall, and only kept from his last mortal ravages by the influence of the poor bushnie's right hand? And then again, what was that influence? Magnetism,

magic, witchcraft. Words could not alter the fact; and there was the fact! Poor Myra! was she conscious all this while of what was going on here, and where she now was? What price would I not pay to buy this experience, and to retain it with the power of adding to it, and multiplying it! To go behind the scenes, — to pluck eternity and immortality of their secrets, — I, a mortal, to be able to do this! But then, it might also win for me the unenviable reputation of being a madman; for I notice that the sanest things are held by men on this earth as the most insane; and that truth has been a liar from the beginning of days.

Puzzled and confounded by these speculations, I knocked the ashes from my pipe, and took seriously to drinking the tea which was now set before me. Deep and serious drinking it was, I assure you, good reader, and I didn't think it was "too good for such a sinner as I am," as poor Coleridge once said of a cup of the delicious beverage which good Mrs. Gilman handed to him, when he had become morbid and orthodoxly religious through excess of opium-eating; for no tea *can* be too good for me because I enjoy it so, and am so thankful for it, as I should also be for rum, if I were a rum-drinker. I do not mean to try rum-drinking, however — not that I dislike stimulants; I like the whole tribe of them, vastly — but they kill the intellect, and rob the body of its chastity, and the conscience of its white innocent robes, and the soul of its divine beauty. Here is the best hope of the glorious boozer expressed in these lines of drunken jollity, with which I will close these parasitic sentences: *

> "And as I mean to end my life
> In such a tavern drinking,
> May some good Christian hold my cup
> For me, if he sees me shrinking,
> That the cherubim may cry, just as I am sinking,
> 'God be merciful to a man of this ere gentleman's way of thinking.'"

Whilst the servant girl was removing the tea things, I heard the jingling of Nab Draffer's town-bell under my window, and looking out, I saw that squat, big-paunched individual, blowing out his red cheeks, preparatory to the announcement that was so big within him, and so eager for utterance. The comicality of his important appear-

* I don't think I have quoted the lines correctly; but they are part of a drinking poem, I believe, written in Latin somewhere about the time of Charles I. or II. of England, and translated by Leigh Hunt, in his usual happy manner. It was once said that an English bishop wrote the poem, but report lied in this case, as it does in most others.

ance tickled me not a little, and I was curious to hear what he had to say, and whether he would deserve the extra moneys which, in that case, I had promised him. His bell had gathered a whole posse of little boys and girls around him, and the good fish wives stood at their cottage doors ready to hear what Nab had to say to them; and I noticed little knots of fishermen standing here and there, in the street, evidently with the same purpose in view. When Nab thought he had sufficiently alarmed the street, he began:

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! This is to give notice that yer Flambrugh chaps is to meet the Leeds genelman to-neet at hafe past seven o' t' clock, i' the Methodyke scule-ruam to be made scollards on, then and there! Yer is n't to meet i' the parson's shop — 'cause why? T' parson says larnin ban't for the likes of ye! and if yer gits larnin, ye'll git to be Methodykes, an' tak to t' kissin' other men's wives, and cheatin t' landlord o' his reckonin, an' himsen o' his church rates, an' Aester dues, an' weddin fees, and buryin' charges — which wad be a awful sin, an' buck yer all for t' wrang shop whan old Boney cums for yer! So them as is afeard o' t' parson and old Boney, is 'tickerly 'quested to keep away, an' them as is n't is invited to come up t' scratch an' show the Flambrugh metal. An' so God save t' fishermen, an' their lawful wives, the queen, an' the Leeds genelman, an' me, Nab Draffer!"

Not so bad, thought I, and characteristic enough of Nab Draffer! And then looking at my watch I found that it was time to go to the meeting. So off I started.

The Methodist school-room was a good-sized oblong building, with a large desk at one end, and the body of it filled with rows of plain deal forms. A number of tin candle-holders hung on the side walls, along with sundry thin canes, — these last being used, I suppose, to teach the village children their Sunday manners and religious proprieties. My friend Mr. Snorra, and a singular-looking man, with a foreign appearance, were the only persons who had arrived at present.

"Friend Snorra," said I, "am I early, or are the men late in coming? How is it?"

"All i' good time, sur," he replied; "it's not yet half past, I think; but I'se not sartan, for my watch is sick, an' t' clockmaker's gotten her to doctor her. This be Polly Dradda's son, sur," he added, abruptly, pulling the foreign-looking man forward at the same moment by the button-hole.

"Indeed!" said I. "I'm glad to see you, friend; I know some-

thing about you already. The stuffed birds in your mother's cottage introduced me to you long ago, and I'm glad to see the man who shot a black swan."

"Those were boyish doings, sir," he replied, fixing a pair of dark, restless, mooney eyes upon me, "and I don't care about such things now," he added. "For I've been a traveller since then, and learned secrets that will shake Christendom. I mean to stuff blacker birds than black swans, the next time I try my hand at stuffing. Rare black birds, sir! who live on the superstitions of the people, and devour widow's houses, and who know no God but gold."

The suddenness and unlooked-for matter of the man's speech fairly startled me, it was so full of vehemence and sarcasm. What did he mean? Was he mad? I confess I thought he was mad. I replied to him, nevertheless, in good faith.

"Rarer birds than black swans are not often found in these latitudes, Mr. Dradda, I think, nor blacker birds. What's the name of those rare black birds you talk about stuffing next?"

"O," said he, with a loud laugh, "they have many names, these pretty black birds! and are of all sizes and degrees of blackness, as there are sizes of magnitude and degrees of glory in the stars, which, let me tell you, are all alive up there, and have blood in them, and great beating hearts and burning souls. But the black birds I speak about have neither hearts nor souls; they are all beak and claw and maw, and they swarm in the earth like vermin. But I have got the secret to kill them all. You need not smile, sir! I tell you I've got the secret," he added, with savage emphasis, his eyes rolling like fireballs in his head. I saw now clearly enough that the man was mad; and I was prevented from replying to him by the opportune entrance of Bill Gibbons, Ben Olaff, and a score or two of the fishermen.

"Bill Gibbons," said I, as my beer-loving friend approached me, "I see there are no candles in those tin hangers on the walls. Here is half a crown, and I want you to go and buy some. You can keep the change, if there should be any, and you can buy a rope with it to hang up your civil daddy of the Golden Lion. But look sharp, Bill, for I want to begin."

Bill took the money with a grin and a nod, and bolted out to execute the commission, whilst I went forward to the desk, followed by Ben Olaff, Mr. Snorra, and Polly Dradda's mad son, "just comed from Ingies."

As soon as Bill entered, and the candles were lighted, I rose to address the men.

"Fishermen!" said I, "I want to help you to do a good thing for yourselves. I find that you're no great scholars, and have n't got the knack of writing and counting readily, and that your ignorance of these matters makes you liable to be cheated by hucksters, or by any knave, indeed, with whom you may chance to deal. Now, it's a bad thing not to be able to write and count, and makes you strong, well-built, handsome chaps, look very weak and helpless when you come to make your bargains. I want to see you strong in mind as well as in body; and those amongst you who are willing to learn, and not ashamed to be taught, will oblige me by holding up the right hand. Good!" said I, as I beheld the brawny fists before me; "then you are all willing. And now I will tell you what I propose for you to do. You must form yourselves into a society for mutual improvement, and appoint your own officers, president, secretary, treasurer, and committee, to govern it. I suppose sixty hands were held up just now. Well, then, all will become members; and each member must pay three pence per week. That will give you an income at once of fifteen shillings per week. With this money you can employ two teachers to give you instructions in writing and counting, three nights per week, and in less than six months there need not be a man amongst you ignorant of these things. I dare say your Methodist friends will let you have the use of this school-room for your class-meetings without taking any rent for it, and all the rest is matter of detail, which can be arranged by any committee you like to appoint, and I shall be glad to help them."

"That's all very good, sir," said Polly Dradda's son, called Paul Dradda, rising suddenly as I paused, and causing a commotion amongst the fishermen, who recognized him at glance, and gave him a hearty cheer of welcome. "That's all very good, sir," he repeated, when the cheering subsided, "and I'm glad for one, that my old mates and townsmen are like to be benefited in the way you name; but I understood that you had it in your head to do more than that for us. Did n't you tell me, Bill Gibbons, that the gentleman said he would send us a library of books from Leeds, and change them as often as we pleased? Now, sir," he added, turning to me, "there's many people in Flamboro' who can read, and would be glad to read if they only had books to read, and if you could let us have some books, too, along with your other good things, you would do us a real service."

"I'm glad to hear you talk in this way, Mr. Dradda," said I, "and nothing would give me more pleasure than to send you a box

of books from our depot at Leeds. You see, my fishermen friends," I added, addressing the tarpaulins, "I represent a society called the 'Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutions,' which numbers upwards of twenty thousand members, and in connection with this society we have what is called 'An Itinerating Library,' and a capital library it is, containing some of the best books, and those dearest and most sacred to man. Prince Albert sent us a fine collection only a few weeks ago, as a present, and all these books are at my disposal. When a village I go to wants books, I have to consider what kind of books would suit them, — for I have all sorts at command, — to suit all sorts of people. And I have already considered what books would suit Flamboro', and am ready to send them to you, if you will comply with the conditions."

"Hear him," cried a dozen voices. "Up reight and down strait," said one; "spakes to t' pint," said another; "no humbugin i' him," cried another; "and what be the conditions, sur?" asked Ben Olaff.

"O, they 're not very heavy, I assure you, Mr. Olaff," said I. "Find me twenty-five men, *or* women; or men *and* women, willing to pay one penny a week each, for three months, and I will send you a box of fifty books, and exchange the box for another, as often as you like, and pay the expense of transit myself. Or find me fifty persons, and I will send you a hundred volumes. Those are the conditions."

"Then we 'll have a hundred volumes to begin with, my mates of Flamboro'," said Paul Dradda, rising in haste. "I 'm a travelled man you see, and bring with me some small quantity of useless gold from India, — useless to me at all events, although I mean to make it useful to you, for I shall pay for the first hundred volumes for three months."

"No, thee wante, Paul Dradda," said Ben Olaff. "We 'se none so poverty-struck as that cums to, nuther. We can pay for oursens. Wat says ye, mates."

"I says," quoth Bill Gibbons, "that it 's vary good o' Paul, an jist like t' lad, as he war afore he left us to gang o'er the seas; but it wante dew! We chaps pays for oursens."

"Three cheers for Paul!" cried Mr. Snorra. "Hip! hip! hurra! hurra! hurra!" he vociferated, as the men caught up lustily the chorus.

"I know you 're good fellows," cried Paul, "and I thank you for these cheers; but now then if you won't let me pay for the books, come and put down your names and money here yourselves. Time flies."

"Will you act as secretary, Mr. Dradda?" asked I. "If so, come up here, and make an entry of the names and moneys, on this sheet of paper." Paul was by my side in an instant; and in the course of a quarter of an hour we had everything complete, so far as the library was concerned.

"Now, then," said I, "you must make your class experiment safe for three months at all events, and you will each have to pay your three pence per week in advance, for that time, the round sum being three shillings."

Paul again acted as secretary and treasurer, and thus the most important part of the work was done. Nothing remained now to do but to appoint the officers; and it was a rule with me, which my experience confirmed as a wise one, to make these officers as numerous as possible. For the greater the number of official persons, the greater was the personal interest and influence enlisted in the success of the society. We soon appointed, therefore, in this case, one president, four vice-presidents, one secretary, one librarian, one treasurer, an auditor, and twenty-four committee men, who were to meet once a week for the transaction of business.

I was just upon the point of leaving this assembly for the tents of Ishmael, when I was astonished by the apparition of the rector, who presented himself in company with the captain of the coast-guard dressed in his gold-laced coat. The impudence of this intrusion paralyzed me for the moment, and I rubbed my eyes to see if it were not an illusion. There was no mistake about it, however; and in a few moments the rector and his friend had advanced close under the desk, facing the audience. There was a commotion of no friendly sort amongst the fishermen, and sundry hisses, and at length loud cries, of "Wat do ye whant here?" "Turn t' parson out!" "He says we 're nubbut dugs; an' would n't lat uz hev his twenty-nine-article scule-rooam, to meet in 't neet!" "He whants uz to pay more church-rates!" &c., &c.

"Be good enough to hold your peace, fishermen!" said I, "and allow the rector to explain the occasion of his extraordinary appearance at this meeting, after the insult he offered you in refusing you the use of his old school-room. Are you willing to extend to him this courtesy? For you have a perfect right to say if you will hear him or not, this meeting being yours and not his."

"Did n't I tell you that the land swarmed with vermin, sir?" demanded Paul Dradda. "And you, men of Flamboro'!" he added, turning to the excited fishermen, "are you such a dastard set that

you will allow this black cock of the Headland to crow his cock-a-doodle-doo over you, whether you will or no? What good did he ever do to you, I should like you to tell me? What good did he ever do to you, I should like him to tell you? When did he sorrow to see you cheated by rascal hucksters, because you could n't count the value of your cargoes? When did he try to teach you to count? When did he tell you that you were men made by the Almighty God, and that you ought to improve yourselves by learning, and read books to make you wise? Has n't he said that learning is n't for the likes of you? You know he has said this, — and yet there he stands before you! Look at him! And think what you are who look at him, and let him stand before you!"

This speech frightened me, and astonished me also, — there was such method in it. I saw, however, that it would n't do to let the effect of it lie and act upon the fishermen, whom it had already violently excited. So I said: "It is doubtless all true what our friend has said, and I 'm sorry it is true. I wish it was n't, for the sake of better men whom I know that wear the cloth this man disgraces. Still I cannot imagine he would come to this meeting out of sheer impudence, and I am willing to believe that he is ashamed of his conduct to you, and of his base opinion of you, and has come here to redeem himself by proposing something for your good at last. I ask you again, then, will you hear him?"

After much wrangling and riotous behavior, most natural under the circumstances, they agreed to hear the rector, on condition that he "cut it short."

"So you will hear me, my good Christian parishioners, will you? Well, I thank you for condescending to hear so poor a servant of the Lord Jesus as I am. Of old, the fishermen heard my Master gladly; but you, I see, are in another humor. And yet you are all good Flamboro' men, and my parishioners for many years, who used to come to church, and hear me also gladly. But you are changed, I see. Anti-Christ has been amongst you; heresy, and now, worse than all, infidelity. You are misguided men; and it is my duty to tell you, you are going the downward road to destruction. It was not enough that you should turn Methodists, and bring that sin upon the parish, but you must turn downright infidels, and encourage infidel men to send for infidel books, to poison your poor souls. What is this new-fangled scheme which this man from Leeds has brought here? It pretends to make you learned after the manner of modern learning, but its real object is to destroy religion, and

bring its ministers into disrepute, and overturn the Church. You are my children still — and — "

"Thou lees!" cried Ben Olaff at the top of his voice. "Thou hes n't gotten uz; we'se none o' thy blood, nor kin, — nor doant whante to be. So yer may shut up, parson, as soon as you 're a mind to."

"I can bear to be railed at by my children, you see," said the rector, smiling like an enraged rattlesnake, "for I continue to speak to them even though they call me liar. It matters little to me, however, what men call me. I have my reward in heaven. And whilst I am here I will do my duty to you. I warn you, therefore, not to pay heed to what this dangerous person from Leeds says to you. Have nothing to do with him or his schemes. He seeks only to ruin you body and soul."

"And is this what you came here to tell us, O holy magpie!" cried Paul, his lip quivering with scorn and rage. "Shame on thy black and white feathers! Shame on thy silly tongue, and on the unskilful fool that cut it so badly! And thou hast been to college! Show us the wooden spoon that fed thee there! for I know they would n't let thee loose on the world without it. O, thou art a dainty magpie! — and Flamboro' is glad because of thee. But thy time will come at last, my fine bird! The museum is building for thee, — and the stuff is sown and grown wherewith thou shalt be stuffed, and gently put into thy glass-case, on the hundred thousandth shelf, for curiosity-mongers to gaze at."

"Who is this man?" said the rector, eying poor crazy Paul with eyes like devouring flame. And amidst the confusion which prevailed Ben Olaff's voice, his ear having caught the question, answered:

"He 's a new prophet, parson, just cumed fra Ingies in a whale's belly. Heed him, parson! an' mend thy ways; and gang thysen hoam, or he 'll be down on thee."

I was sick and disgusted with these proceedings, and the cause of them, so I called loudly for silence, and said:

"Fishermen! let us end this disgraceful scene. The rector has shown himself to be neither a Christian nor a gentleman, but an impudent bully, — and I think we can afford to let him alone. So I dissolve this meeting."

With that I left the desk, and after exchanging a few words with the men, exhorting them to retire peaceably, and let the parson alone, I hurried over the fields, and took the shortest cut to the encampment.

CHAPTER XX.

BIG TOON, AND "EVIL ABROAD." — REVELATIONS FROM THE SLEEP MADE BY THE HEALING HAND.

AS I jumped over the hedge into the magic circle of the tents, my descent alarmed the dogs, and they began to bark furiously, but my voice soon quieted them; and my own hound was speedily at my side, welcoming me back with unmistakable demonstrations of love. I stooped down on to the grass, and fondled him in return; for I loved him as well as he loved me.

At Granny Mabel's camp-fire big Toon was smoking his short black pipe; the moon was rolling in the cloudy sky above him, the sea booming below him, the calm, still night around him. In a few moments I was before him. "Brother," I said, "you watch late to-night; did you expect me?"

"You promised to come, brother," he replied; "I expected you. The bushnie never lied to his pals."

"And he is n't going to now, child Toon! You see I 'm here, redeeming my word."

"It 's no more nor I expected, Master Geordie," said he, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and filling it again; then lighting it, and smoking away like one very busy with his own thoughts.

"And how is our sister Myra, brother?" said I. "You seem very dull and miserable to-night! I hope there 's no harm inside the tent, more than you warned me of to-day."

"No, Master Geordie, none that I knows of i' that quarter, though we 're all bad enough about the beauty of the tribe."

"Well, brother, what 's to be done?"

"Walk inside, Master Geordie, and hear what granny says; as for me, I've no heart to do anythin'. There 's evil abroad, as well as danger at home."

"What do you mean, big Toon? what do you mean by evil abroad, and you no heart to meet it? Who ever heard tell of the like of that? Who dare say it of Ishmael Toon, beside himself, I should like to know?"

"Brother," said he, rising, and speaking hoarsely, between his teeth, "I've fund out a secret as is no pleasant thin'; an' I don't want to rile you with it, just now, when you're wanted inside the darlin's tentie. Go in there first, and come back to me arterwards; I ain't a going for to sleep this night, not no how."

"But what's the matter, big un? I wish to get inside granny's tarpaulin, and hear how sister Myra fares; but I know you, big Toon, better nor you thinks I do; and I know you would n't take on i' that ways if there was n't somethin' more nor ordinary i' the wind. So out with it, brother, and tell me what disturbs you so."

"Not till you've been inside, brother, and then mayhaps I shall, for I wants a clear head to talk to."

"As you please, brother. You tawnies have your own wills and ways, and it ain't for a sojourner like me to gainsay them. Is granny awake?"

"Yes, Master Geordie."

"Then I shall go to her straight away. You will remain here till I come back?"

"So I shall, Master Geordie," said he, quietly lighting his pipe, and spreading himself before the fire, whilst I turned round, and entered old Mabel's tent door.

"The blessings of the best day on you, granny," said I, greeting the old mother, who sat in the middle of her house, amongst the straw, with a tallow candle burning on a three-legged stool before her.

"And the blessings o' the best day and night on you, Master Geordie," she replied, without rising, or showing any emotion of surprise at my appearance. "This ere's a thing I'se beside myself about, and can't read the lines on any ways, i' heaven, nor i' all my past knowins."

"The long sleep you mean, granny, I suppose, don't you?" said I.

"Yes, Master Geordie, the long, long sleep; and the signs and wonders that I'se seed and heered thereby; the warnin' voices of the blessed angelers, and the words o' sorrer that hes broke't the old woman's heart, an' made her long for death, an' the peace that lies under the green grass."

"Dear granny, don't talk i' that fashion. You frighten the poor bushnie chap, who loves you and the dark-eyed girl, his sister, and comes to do what he can to serve her."

"You need n't fash, Master Geordie, and let what the old Toon

woman says scare away your wits; and I need n't tell you all I knows and have heered through these long mortal hours of my beauty's sleep. Think I does n't know that you loves *her*, Master Geordie? Small need o' words to tell the old grandam that. And what if she loves *you*, Master Geordie, and what if all this love must come to naught? What if the angelers forbids it, as well as the gypsy law? What if they dooms one to somebody else, and t' other to misery which eats out the life from the body, and gnaws the bloom from the young cheek, and makes a coffin full o' dust o' the dear young heart? O Master Geordie! what if all this is the truth of the good God?"

"It is hard to bear, granny," said I, very deeply affected. "But how did you find it out?"

"What matters that to you or me, young man? You are a stranger, and we welcomed you to our tents, — as is n't used to welcome strangers, — and you brings us this misery!" cried the old woman bitterly; wringing her hands and weeping aloud, sobbing and weeping aloud.

"But, dear granny, I did n't mean to do it; and if I've done it, I could n't help it. I would n't bring misery upon the Toons, man nor woman of them, as you all know; for I love you all, and this that has come to pass was not of my seeking. Ask my sister if I ever said or did a dishonorable thing to her. You, granny, know I never did nor could do such, and your reproach of me wounds me very deeply. As if I could put a serpent into the generous hand that does me a kindness! Granny Mabel, you know me better. Confess now that you wrong me, and that what the angelers have told you is true, and that fate is greater than I."

"I knows it, good Master Geordie. Think I does n't knows it?" said the old dame, in a subdued, reconciling voice. "Come here, Master Geordie, an' let the ancient 'oman o' the Toon tribe feel your hand, that is so dainty, an' true to her race. I knows it, Master Geordie," said she, as I gave her my hand; "the likes o' you could n't stan' again them! Nor could all the powers o' airth! for they plays wi' the powers o' airth, as big Toon plays wi' the four pins when he flings the bowl at their nobs. But the nateral 'fections gets the better o' a body nows and thens, e'en agin the knowin' mind, as knows how things is; and you mun excuse me, Master Geordie, for misery is misery, whether it be 's brote by a chap as knows what he 's a doin', or one that cums like the wind, an' is ignorant. I does n't blame you, Master Geordie," she added, stroking my head as if I had been a great black Newfoundland dog.

"I 'm glad of it, granny dear," said I, "and your words have taken a load off my heart which I could n't very well bear there. And now what is to be done about my sister?"

"True, Master Geordie, what's to be done about her? O, I'se a fine grandam, I is, wi' my own selfish feeling afore her. An' she a lyin' there in a sleep, like the sleep o' death! Wo's me, wo's me! that can forget my darlin', i' my own sorrer," she cried, rising, and seizing the candle. "Cum this way, Master Geordie, an' the Great Name put his favor on us."

Once again I passed through the canvas passage, trembling, my heart beating, and my senses afloat. In another instant I was in Myra's tent. There lay the beautiful girl, very pale, but with an ecstatic expression upon her face which no words of mine could represent to the reader. Her posture was the same as when I left her, nor was there the least sign of change in her in any respect.

"Something tells me, granny," said I, "that you had better quit the apartment, and leave me and Myra alone. You will understand what that means, I've no doubt, and not think the bushnie a rude chap for speaking of it."

"Not I as will, Master Geordie," she replied; "I knows the blessed angelers better nor that; an' so I leaves you to the good that is to come." Saying which she vanished.

I gazed at Myra for a few moments, and felt that she was conscious of my presence. I took her hand in mine, and bending over her, kissed her beautiful forehead.

"Myra," said I, "do you know who has hold of your hand?"

"Yes," she replied, without the least hesitation; "it is you, Geordie."

"And why have you slept so long, dearest?"

"I have not slept at all," she said, "I have been visiting the land of spirits."

"And what did you see there, dearest, that made you stay so long from your friends, causing them so much anxiety about you?"

"Such things, Master Geordie, as words cannot represent; nor any signs nor symbols known to man in this mortal sphere. World after world of wondrous, unspeakable beauty; landscapes, cities, palaces, gardens, rivers, and seas of light and splendor, all populous with happy spirits whose loveliness has no similitude in human forms and features, no archetype in the human mind or imagination. And yet everything appeared to me so natural; so like what is best and most beautiful, — what is grandest and sublimest in the physical portrait-

ure of earth, in man, in art, and all that belongs to art and man's doings; and yet again so unlike, that whilst the picture of it is as vivid as fire in my own brain I cannot describe it, through lack of words to convey the form, the coloring, and meaning of it. It was not material, there was nothing material in those strange and marvellous worlds, there were all the attributes of matter without the grossness of matter, — a perpetual sunshine, but no material sun, — everything was ideal, spiritual, but so real that I felt quite at home, and ate and talked with the spirits and helped them in their labors and avocations as if they were of my own tribe and kin; and walked with them over immeasurable longitudes of fruitful and floral plains, over which cities and palaces were thickly strown. And I felt so happy that, but for my love for you, Geordie, I could have remained there forever. This drew me back again to earth and, alas! to sorrow; for I now know better than I knew before that there is no hope for me here, although death itself cannot destroy the love which burns and sustains the wild pulses of my heart."

"Dearest Myra, do not talk so sadly. I shall ever love you as I now do. Nothing shall tear me from you; for I feel that you have become a part of my very being. But tell me, what can I do to restore you to yourself, that I may once again behold my beloved in her own natural health and beauty?"

"Yes, you love me, Geordie," she replied heedless of the question as if she had heard it not; "you love me, I know it well; and if there were no fate and no spirit world, and nothing higher than the poor gypsy girl, I should be yours and you mine forever. But I am not deceived. I know you, and myself and my own doom, and I am satisfied. But then again, I am a woman, and I am not satisfied. My heart is full of infinite yearnings and longings for a requited love, — a love equal to mine, — an only, sole, undivided love, and you, Geordie, have not that to give me! I do not blame you. I know it cannot be so; and this is why I am sorrowful. O that I should live to love and not be loved again! O that my heart must burn out in its own ashes, — perish in its own fires, — utterly, hopelessly perish! Shall I not question the justice of the Great Name? his right to make me thus, and doom me thus? What evil had I done before my birth, that this sentence should be written against me? or what since, that it should come to pass? Is it indeed a crime to love one not of my race? Then why make the stranger so beautiful to tempt me? I gather flowers by the wayside, those which are sweetest and brightest; I do not care for the weeds and

darnels, — I know not why, but I do not care for them; I love only the beautiful sweet flowers. Who put that love into my heart? who gave me the eyes to see, and the ears to hear, and the heart to feel? And shall he punish me for his own deed? No, it is not a crime to love out of my own race! But the flowers love you not again, Myra, however much you may love them, — shall that then make you love them the less? shall that make you weep and wail, and be sorrowful till you die? O no! it is so sweet to love, that I had rather love till I die, and dying, love on through death and immortality, than live without loving, even though no answering lips kissed away my passionate kisses, nor surging heart heaved tempestuously with all its infinite tides, mingling with mine. Geordie," she added, suddenly starting as if from a reverie, "it is all well, and as it should and must be. I am selfish to think and speak as I do. I know you love me, dearest, for I can read your heart, and am conscious of your inmost thoughts; you will continue to love me as you can, and I will love both you and Violet. I know what passed between you on the heath to-day; for my spirit was with you. She is your love; but I alone can and will fit her to be your bride."

As she spoke these words, a sudden convulsion shook her from head to foot; the blood rushed back to her face; her eyes gradually opened, dawning upon mine, whilst surprise, inquiry, wonder, mingled with their dark, lustrous, and magnetic beauty, and I knew that the sleep had passed away from her.

CHAPTER XXI.

MYRA AWAKES FROM THE SLEEP. — WHAT BIG TOON HEARS BEHIND THE BANK OF RED MARL. — PLOT FOR ROBBING THE RECTORY. — COUNTER-PLOT. — GEORDIE'S STRUGGLE WITH THE BURGLARS IN VIOLET'S CHAMBER. — THE GAGGED PARSON. — ARREST OF THE BURGLARS. — EXIT BIG TOON AND HIS PALS.

"WELL, dearest," said I, folding her to my heart as soon as she was wide awake, and rapturously kissing her; "are you glad that I am here to welcome you back once more to this profane earth? And are you quite well?"

"O yes, dearest Geordie," she replied, returning warmly my embraces, and half covering my shoulders with her glorious black hair. "I am quite well now, and very, very happy that you are here. Have I slept long?"

"Rather longer than is usual for a pretty gypsy chi, whose feet ought to be wet with the dews of the morning every day in the year, if she means to keep her good looks. Had you slept much longer, I should have gone into my tent and written a supplement to the story of the 'Seven Sleepers,' making you the eighth; and I've no doubt I should have turned a pretty penny by it with the booksellers."

"Why don't you do so, Geordie, dear? I should like to have seen what you would have written about the tawny girl; many hard things I dare say, for she must have given you a great deal of trouble. But tell me now, how long have I slept? It is still night."

"Yes, it is still night, dearest; but not the same night as it was yesternight when you first went to sleep."

"Then I have slept through one whole day and nearly two nights — is it so?"

"Precisely, if the sun has made no mistake in going his rounds, and he is a tolerably punctual fellow, notwithstanding his amorous

disposition, and the temptations which do continually beset him on his way."

"It is very curious; I never slept so long before in my life."

"And what have you been dreaming about, darling? Tell me some of the fine things you have seen and heard."

"O, I do not remember anything. I must have been in a dead, blank sleep all the while."

"Not remember anything! why it is n't half an hour ago since you told me you had seen such beautiful things, — such palaces, cities, gardens, fruit plains and glorious spirits, — that I wished I could have slept myself into the same dream, and gone floating with you through those immeasurable plains of heaven."

"What do you mean, Geordie, dear? What do you speak about?"

"Exactly what I say, neither more nor less."

"That I talked to you when I was asleep, and said these things?"

"Yes; and said them, too, in a language which, well as you generally talk, beat Cocker to nothing and nobody."

"You would n't say what was n't true, Geordie, I know; but I cannot comprehend it, nevertheless; for I have n't the smallest recollection of anything of the sort."

"Never mind that, dearie; it was all moonshine, I dare say. And now that you are well again, who cares whether it were or not!".

"But what did I say, Geordie? I am anxious to know how a Rommany Chi would talk in her sleep."

"Well, I shall perhaps tell you another time, my dark-eyed, beautiful Eve; but not now. I am going to have a smoke and a bit of midnight jaw with the little child Toon. It 's an engagement I 've made with him; and besides, I want to go and comfort poor old granny's heart, by telling her you are quite well, and waiting to see her. Won't you let me go, darling?"

"To be sure, dearest Geordie; go at once. I ought to have thought of poor old granny before."

I left her, with parting caresses, and going into granny's tent, told her the happy issue of the sleep.

"An' she 's quite well, do ye say, Master Geordie?" cried the old woman; "quite well arter the long sleep that looked the sleep which knows no wakin'! I knowed it, young man. Lord bless you! I knowed it; altho' I was so douty on the Healing Hand this time, which may the purty angelers forgive me! But it war all along o' my love and 'ziety for the little chi, and none that I doubted

at the bottom o' my bowels. Remember that, young man; and don't go for to be a larfer at the ode 'oman, and to misbelieve i' the power o' the Healing Hand. The darlin' little chi!" she muttered, as lifting the canvas she passed into Myra's tent.

I walked outside into the cool night, and found Baby Toon sitting by the blazing fire, his elbows on his knees, and his head between his hands, buried in reflection.

"Ishmael!" said I, "the little girl has come out of the sleep, and is well."

"Lord bless you, Master Geordie, for that news," said he, rising and shaking me heartily by the hand. "You 're sure on it, are you, Master Geordie?"

"Just as sure as that you and I are standing here together on the green sward."

"That 's enough blessin' then," said he, "for one day and night, and I 'm a going to eat humble pie and be thankful."

"Good," said I; "it is always good to be grateful, gaffer Toon. I hate an ungrateful man, and don't want to eat with him, walk with him, talk to him, or know even that such a thing lives on the face of the meek and grateful earth. He has no right to his lodgings nor rations, and I wonder, in the beautiful and classic language of Dr. Watts, — a far greater man than the man we call Shakespeare, big Toon; who was, nevertheless, the greatest of modern men, — I wonder, I say, in the classic language of the great little Dr. Watts, that the 'ravens don't pick out his eyes, and eagles eat the same.'"

"Too good for 'um, Master Geordie," cried Toon with much simplicity and earnestness. "Too good for 'um! And glory be to the Great Name, the good Gor A'mighty, for the little chi's sake!"

"And now, big 'un," said I, "what 's the evil that 's abroad, and makes you so dumpy. Speak out, man, and cut it as short as you can, for I tell you I 'm right down tired, and long to stretch myself on the straw."

"There 'll be no sleep for you to-night, Master Geordie, or I 'm much mistain i' my countin's."

"How so, big 'un?"

"'Cause it 's like to be a bad job, an' I 'm reckonin' on you to lend a hand."

"What 's likely to be a bad job, Ishmael? Can't you speak a plain talk?"

"O yes, Master Geordie, I can speak plain as a pikestaff, — but it 's hard to go agin one's own race, an' we so poor and downtrod; but it sall be done."

"May the Devil take me, Toon, if I don't think you're daft, and want putting into a strait-jacket. Tell your tale, man, at once, if you wish to keep me in your service; otherwise I shall cross over to my tent."

"Well, then, you see, Master Geordie," he began, "arter I left you this evening at the Golden Lion, I took to the road wi' a quick foot towards the camp, thinking all the time of the poor little chi lying asleep i' her tent, and sayin' to Gor A'mighty as I went along, 'Please Gor A'mighty have pity on the poor little chi as is so sick at home. Do, if you please, good Gor A'mighty!' An' then when I thote o' all her purty ways, and how pleasant she made the old tarpaulin' streets wi' her singin's, and her little foot dancin's, and her smiles and laughs and all that, — and then thote that perhaps we might lose her and never see her no more, that d—d chokin cumed over me agin, and I went an' set down under some trees by the red bank, on the wayside, an' pullin' 'Black Billy' out o' my hatband I filled his inards full of weed, an' began to smoke to cheer my heart up. Presently I heerd some chaps a coming down the road talkin' in the Rommany lingo, an' as I did n't care to be seen jist then I lay by, thinkin' I would let 'um pass, though as they did n't belong to my tribe I was curious to know who they was, an' shud have contrived to find out, you may depend. I was struck all of a heap, howsumdiver, when they pulled up as they did, an' cum an' sot under a knoll within five yards o' me. I seed them as they cumed up to t' bank, but they could n't see me, — an' when they sot down they left my eyesight, 'cause I could n't look thro' red marl; but hearin' is longer retched; that is i' close quarters, Master Geordie, when sich thin's as red marl banks is in the way; 'cause though you can't see through the marl you can hear through it, or over it, or some other how. They talked Rommany all the while, — and this is what they was arter. They was a planin' to rob the Flamboro' parson's house to-night, — that is as soon as the moon was down, which it ain't jist at present you particularize, Master Geordie. They said the ode buffer had a sight o' gold i' the house, as they know'd through the groom lad, who heerd the sarvant gal braggling about it. An' they said a young lady as was there had jeweltry enough in her room to make any poor body's fortin. An' so they agreed to do the job to-night."

"And you did n't throttle the rascals, Big Toon, but came sneaking home, wasting your time before you said a word about it, or did anything to prevent it, until it is perhaps even now too late to put a bullet through their heads, the mischief being done."

"Big Toon knows what he 's about, Master Geordie, and who the lady is at the parson's house, and who is her friend. I never forsakes a pal, and don't know the shape o' sneakin', Master Geordie, an' that 's a hard word from the like o' you. But the little chi was first, Master Geordie, first wi' big Toon, an' now she 's well, I'se ready to go wi' you, and brain these thieves who is so ready to bring ruin on the name and race of the gypsies."

"In God's name, then, Ishmael, let us be off at once. Why did I not know of this before?"

"It wur no use tellin' on yer. All 's done up to this time as could be done."

"What do ye mean?"

"Ikey's out there scoutin', and the Knife Grinder's lyin' ambush i' the garden."

"That 's the time o' day, my little bantling! That 's good, brother Toon. We shall nab the rascals yet."

I ran to my tent and taking off my clothes put on my gypsy suit; then loading my pistols I returned to big Toon, when we set off at a brisk run over the fields for the rectory. As we approached the garden-wall from the moorland we lay down for a few minutes to listen, and take observations. A profound stillness reigned over the landscape and the village, — over the parsonage-house, and the old-fashioned church on the hill, which like a lone old mother kept watch over the silent graves around it; and the sight of the church, surrounded by funereal trees and the solemnities of death, awakened the saddest feelings within me, as I thought of the strife and evil which man's passions were even then engendering in their midst. And the rectory too, in which all my best hopes were shrined, how quiet it looked! And she in whom my thoughts and affections centred, how sweetly she slept under the unconscious roof, in happy ignorance of her danger! How cruel to disturb and alarm her by violence and outrage, — she so pure, innocent, and good. She should not be disturbed, however, if I and those who were with me could prevent it, and I felt pretty sure we could.

"How long will it be before the moon goes down, big 'un?" I asked in a low tone as we lay together on the grass.

"An hour and a half yet," he replied, "full; but the sky is gettin' cloudy, and they 'll be at work afore then if the darkness favors 'um."

At this moment we heard a low whistle apparently not far off, which was immediately answered by a more distant one; and be-

fore I had time to ask Ishmael the meaning of it, he replied by a similar whistle, which, as I soon learned, was a preconcerted signal between him and his pals to let each other know that all of them were on the ground. Still there was no sign of the housebreakers, and we lay quiet for half an hour, during which time the moon was nearly hidden by the clouds, appearing only at intervals through chasms in their blackness. We then crept nearer to the rectory walls, that we might be in readiness for immediate action, and in a better position to hear what might be stirring. On a sudden we saw by the dim light a dusky form creeping rapidly towards us on hands and feet. My hand instinctively grasped a pistol in my side pocket, as I called upon Toon to look towards the approaching apparition. "Hist!" he ejaculated; and then half rising from his recumbent posture he uttered a sharp hissing sound between his teeth, which was immediately responded to, and in another second Ikey — for it was he — had crawled in between us and lay flat on the ground.

"What 's up, Ikey?" said I; "where are the lockbreakers nested?"

"Put your mouth to the airth, Master Geordie," said he, "and show your back to the clouds; then we can talk. The airth don't carry tales like the air, but hears and sees, and says nothin' — mindin' its own business, which it would do many folks good if they follered its leadin's."

"What hev you made out, Ikey?" asked Toon, as, in obedience to Ikey's hint, we put our heads together in the grass.

"There 's four on 'um," said Ikey, "an' I knows 'um all. There, away yonder in the castle walls, an' they means to try it on when the moon goes below."

"What 's to be done, then, big Toon?" said I. "Shall we call the Grinder and go and take them straight away? I would n't have the rectory disturbed for the worth of Flamboro'."

"No, no! Master Geordie! That cock won't fight," said Toon; "we must catch 'um in the hact, or we shall hev note agen 'um. Ikey, you go and join the Grinder, and keep your weather eyes open; and don't go for to move i' this ere business till they tries to break into the nob's house. Then blow out the signal, an' Master Geordie an' me 'ul soon be over the wall."

"Good!" exclaimed Ikey, as he crawled away from us, and vanished in the darkness.

The next quarter of an hour that we lay there was a very anxious and exciting time with me; and more than once or twice I thought I

could distinguish strange sounds, mingled with whispering and muffled voices in the neighborhood of the rectory; but big Toon said it was all fancy, and that the pals being nearer to the house than we were would have given the alarm before now, if such had really been the case. My hearing, however, was so intensely wrought that it was preternaturally acute, and although I succumbed to Toon's judgment, I was far from being convinced that I was deceived. Suddenly the church clock struck two, and the sound of the bells had scarcely ceased vibrating, when a cry of help, — a woman's cry, — smote wildly upon the night, through an open casement in the rectory. I knew that voice even in its agony; although I had never heard it but in the utterance of the sweetest and softest articulations. In an instant, therefore, I cleared the wall, followed by big Toon, and rushed to the spot whence the cries proceeded. It was the window to the left of the entrance porch on the first floor, in front of the house, and it was just light enough for me to discover Violet as I approached. In the mean while, however, Ikey and the Grinder were in a deadly struggle with two of the housebreakers on the gravel-walk opposite the door, and bidding Toon go to their assistance, which he did with alacrity, and as will be shown hereafter with the success which usually attended any interference of his, I called aloud to Violet that help was at hand, and told her I was the gypsy chap she knew about, and that she need not be alarmed.

"O, what shall I do?" she cried; "the robbers are in the house. I heard them break into the rector's room. O, do protect me! I am all alone here, and so frightened."

"If you will trust me, pretty lady," said I, "I will be along side of you in a moment, and take care no harm comes to you. My pals outside have got two of 'um safe enough."

"O, thank you, good young man! Yes, indeed, I will trust you. But how are you to reach the window? O, be quick! I hear them even now threatening to kill the rector," she exclaimed wildly, wringing her hands.

"I 'll soon find a way to reach it, Miss," said I, as planting my feet in a wooden lattice-work, which ran over the front of the house for the roses and honeysuckles to cling to, I climbed hand over head to the window-sill, and so into the chamber.

"Now, Miss, don't be alarmed," said I, as I stood before the frightened beauty; "for no harm shall come to you whilst the gypsy chap is alive. My pals 'ul be in the house in a jiffy, and not one o' the four rascals will escape."

At this moment a loud shriek burst from an adjoining room, and I could distinctly hear the sound of a terrible struggle, and then in a few moments all was still. "They are killing the rector! O, they are killing the rector!" exclaimed Violet. "Save him, young man! O, pray save him!"

Thus appealed to, I was about to leave Violet for the scene of the fray, — although it was to protect her that I was there, and I am ashamed to say that the rector's life did not seem to me of so much value that I should put Violet's in jeopardy on his account, — so, as I said, I was about to leave her most unwillingly, when the noise of heavy feet in the little gallery approaching her room arrested me, and I drew one of my large horse pistols from my side pocket ready for immediate use. "Get under cover of the bed-curtains, Miss," I said hurriedly; "they are coming to your room, and will get a warm reception. Only don't be frighted, pretty bird."

The words were hardly out of my mouth when the chamber door was burst open and a dark gypsy fellow staggered in, with an oil lamp in his hand, which he had evidently taken from the kitchen to light him on his adventures. He had no time to reconnoitre, however, much less to finger the pretty jewels which Violet had on her toilet table; for I delivered him such a blow over the face with the barrel of my "bulldog" as sent him sprawling backwards, and knocked him senseless. The lamp was extinguished in the *melée*, and made the "darkness visible." But I had seen another fellow at the back of the senseless tawny, as he entered with the light, and I now listened to hear what had become of him, retreating a step or two that I might be more on my guard against him if, being present, he should venture to make a sudden attack. I could not hear a sound, however, save the heavy and hard breathing of the prostrate man; all was still, too, out of doors, and there was no sign of my pals either in or out of the house. I had the highest faith in them, however, and I was sure they were neither far off nor idle. This suspense lasted four or five minutes, until I began to think that the remaining burglar had sneaked off; so I spoke a kind and cheering word to Violet.

"How is it with the little lady?" said I; "she 's not scared, I hope? This 'ere fellow on the floor won't rise in a hurry, and there 's on'y another to take. I a' most think it 'ud be as well for the little girl to strike a light. It ain't good seein' i' the dark."

"O, you are very good, very, very good!" she cried, "and I can never repay you; but I have no matches to get a light with, and it 's so horrible to be in the dark."

"Well, never mind about the light then, lady; there 's other help at hand, and we shall soon have light enough."

"Is there?" roared a voice in my ears with the suddenness of a thunderclap, whilst my arms were seized at the same moment in the grip of two powerful hands. "The help won't come i' time to save you from bein' strangled, yer d—d meddling bushnie!" With that the man who spoke released my right arm to grasp my throat; but he had a nimble chap to deal with, who had learned wrestling in the fells of Cumberland, and had grappled many a time with Tom Crawshaw, and given and received many a fall in these encounters; so I dodged the foul play he was showing me by a sudden movement of the head. Seizing his collar, I closed with him; my right leg locked in his left leg, when he, finding that he had got his match, let go my left arm also, and showed me his best abilities. I soon found out that he knew nothing of the science of wrestling, and although he was a powerful man, I did not fear him a whit. He dragged me more than once hither and thither, and tried hard to throw me, but could not; and I saw that I should soon have the advantage of his exhausting struggles. At last we both stood still in the middle of the room, each trying hard for the fall. He pressed heavily to my right; but I stood firm, and then, in the twinkling of a bedpost, I tripped up his left foot, and flinging all my weight upon him, threw him with a squelch which shook the floor, my knees doing no small mischief to his abdominals, as I fell thus upon him. I held him where he was in spite of his efforts to turn over and release himself; whilst poor little Violet, ignorant of the present issue of the struggle, screamed hysterically. I called to her, therefore, to be quiet, adding that there was nothing to fear, as the fellow was safe enough under my knuckles.

By this time, however, the other fellow gave unmistakable signs of coming to his senses again, and my man was not slow to recognize them, calling aloud to him to come and kill the poor bushnie, which was a little too bad, and not chivalric in my angry, discomfited bully man. How I might have fared between the two I do not know; but I now heard my pals' voices in the house, and presently saw a light on the stairs, and heard Toon calling my name at the top of his tongue. I gave him the hunting "View hollo!" in reply, which led him and the Grinder to the chamber where I was. All this, which has taken so long to tell, did not occupy fifteen minutes to enact; and as Toon entered the room and saw how I had been engaged, he laughed outright.

"Could n't you hev made shorter work on 't, Master Geordie, with them bulldogs of your'n?" said he. "I 'se fond enough o' seein' a good feight atween two honest chaps; but Lord 'a macy, you must be fond of a fall to try it on wi' sich as these. A bit of lead would hev saved you a world o' trouble, and no harm done, Master Geordie."

"Well, then, big 'un," said I, "just come and handle this chap for me, will you; for I 'm a little out of breath, and should be all the better for a mouthful of fresh air."

"Ay, ay!" said Toon, seizing the fellow by the scuff of the neck and the nether side of his breeches, as I arose from the carrion. "I 'll handle him. Stand up, ye evil Loke," he added, as he pulled him on to his legs by main force. "It 's you and the likes o' you as hes brote sorrow to the tawnies, an' made the names they go by a byword o' shame and scorn i' the mouths of the bushnies. But you 've found the web at last, and by the Great Name, Pento, you shall swing at the gibbet wi' the rest of your accursed pals, if the parson's got pluck enough to bring you afore the beak. Tie up the t'other chap, brother Grinder, whilst I do the fixins for this 'ere."

With that big Toon drew a hempen cord from his pocket, and began to bind brother Pento's arms and legs as coolly as if he were binding an ox. Up to this time neither Pento nor his mate had spoken a word, so astonished were they at the appearance of big Toon and the Grinder, and at the part they were taking in their arrest. At length Pento spoke:

"It 's agen all gypsy law, Ishmael Toon, for any o' us to 'peach one another. You ain't goin' to break it, I hope. It 's as much as your life 's woth, and you 'never dare show your face among the tawnies agen."

"I dares for to show my face, Pento," said Toon, "any wheres i' all this land, or any other. 'Cause why? I never breaks into folks' housen, nor frightens the pretty bushnie girls, nor steals their jewel try, nor does any sin agen man, or Him that is above us. An' when I 'm doin' a right thin, an' the gypsy law says it 's wrong, I 'se not afeared o' the gypsy law. We Toons are a quiet people, and never quarrels wi' nobody, an' never bore the name of thief or liar. An' here is you, Pento, as cums down into our street, close to our tents, to break into a nob's house, knowing that sich is the spicions o' the bushnies, that if you gets clear away, the monkeys 'ul be down on the Toon camp direkelty they finds it out. And I ain't a goin' for to hev the good name o' the tribe spiled for the likes o' you."

"Never mind jawing to that fellow, big Toon," said I; "but you 'll have to loosen his legs a little, my wiseacre, or we shall have to carry him down into the kitchen, instead of making him walk, which would n't be particularly agreeable, I think."

"Right, Master Geordie! You see I 'm so bent on givin' him his gruel that I forgets things."

"Well, big 'un, the sooner we make these chaps safe below the better. That done, we can return and look after the parson, if they have n't already put an end to his preaching, which is most likely."

"No harm done to stop his preachin', Master Geordie; for preachin's a dreary kind o' talk, an' makes a chap's belly ache. I 'se heered a famous joker i' that line o' business i' my time, — they called him Billy Dawson, a great Methodyke, who cumed to the tents to convart us to somethin' or another; but I never could tell what it was, 'cause I 'm no book chap, I suppose; and even that 'ere joker talked a deal o' stuff, as bad to hear as doctor's physic is to take. So it 's no harm to stop the preachin'; but if there 's been foul play wi' the parson, why then look out, Mr. Pento!"

As my pals went down stairs I returned a moment to Violet's room. I knew she had hidden herself behind the curtains and remained quiet whilst the men were in her room, that she might not be subjected to unnecessary exposure; for I knew also that she was in her night-dress. I now spoke to her, however, in the dark, and she was weeping.

"Pretty lady," said I, "all the danger is over; but me and my pals is a goin' directly to seek the parson, and maybe your ladyship would like to go with us. I don't hear any o' the servants astir; but mayhap they 're too scared to get out o' bed: but one on 'em ought to sit up wi' you for the rest o' t' night. Shall I bring a light for the poor little bird as is so frightened at the housebreakers?"

"O you 're very good, indeed, young man, and very kind. I will do as you say, and if you will fetch me a light, I will be down immediately."

So I brought a lamp and set it against the chamber door, and returned to the kitchen.

I found the two men with whom the Grinder and Ikey had the struggle outside, securely bound and lying on the floor, whilst Ikey stood over them with a bludgeon in his hand. Toon said they had a hard fight of it, and one of them got away, and led him and the Grinder a nice chase over the moor before they caught him; and

this was the reason why they were so long before they came to my assistance.

Violet soon made her appearance in a loose undress, captivating my chums with her beauty and beautiful manners.

"Lord, Miss," said Toon, as soon as he could find his tongue, "if it ain't a darned crime to scare sich a pretty, blue-eyed beauty as you be, wi' your sweet voice which sounds for all the world like a mixture of brooks, and singin birds, an' west winds amongst the leaves o' the tall beeches, wi' a sprinklin' o' nightingale in it. And you may depend, pretty lady, that I 'se sorry for ye, and I tell yer that if these rascals had hurt a single shinin' hair i' all your head, — which looks just like the golden sun — an' I begs your pardon, Marm — when it rises through the mists o' the mornin', — I 'd have screwed their necks, as old granny screws geese!"

"You 're all very kind to me, good friends," she replied, "and I am indeed grateful to you. But would you be so kind as to go at once to the rector's room, that I may know how he is. This uncertainty is excessively painful to me. I will show you the way, if you will come."

We will go anywhere, an' do anythin' for you, the Lord bless your dear heart!" said Toon. "An' mind, Ikey, you stays behind; an' if one of them chaps stirs, knock his brains out. Do you hear, Ikey?"

"Ikey hears," said he; and away we went up stairs to the rector's room.

Violet knocked at the door, and asked if the rector was safe and well, and if he wanted anything, but there was no reply.

"Perhaps he sleeps," said Violet, "I will knock again."

She did so, and still there was no reply. At last I said, "I think it would be better for us to enter at once," and this being agreed to, we opened the door, and stood in the recumbent presence. Yes, there on his bed lay the clerical presence, gagged, his hands and feet bound so that he could not move. He who but yesterday was so proud and haughty to the benevolent Leeds chap, and would n't aid him in his man-school project, nor his itinerating library scheme; who despised the poor Flamboro' fishermen, and hated education because it made the servant-man think himself as wise as the parson, and fed the heresy of Methodism; he, who so insolently and impolitely told his ancient flunkey to "show this man the door, John"; there he lay, quite chapfallen; eyes staring, wild, and watery; nose dropping with rheum; face whiter than the sepulchre; mouth wide

open, gaping hideously with its toothless gums; lolling tongue; and the whole countenance beaded with perspiration, and expressive of the direst affright and horror.

Violet flew to his side, and putting her arms round his neck, wept aloud.

"Knock them sleepers from his jaws, big 'un!" said the Grinder. "I never seed a chap i' such a pickle i' all my born days."

"Come away, little birdee!" said Toon kindly, as he moved Violet gently on one side. And as he bent over the poor parson to remove the gags from his mouth, he (the parson) shuddered as if he were in the article of dissolution, so thoroughly did the spasm affect his entire mortal nature.

"You need n't be afeared o' me, parson," said Toon. "I ain't a rattlesnake; an' I don't cum to do yer no harm, though I be a gypsy like them as brote all this mischief on the house. Lie quiet, can't you? I want to tak them bits o' stick out of your gums, an' you mind yer don't bite me, ole feller, do ye hear?"

So without more ado he removed the villanous props; but the mouth still kept agape, and would n't close. Violet brought a glass of water, and I suggested a wine-glass of brandy in it as a good restorative to his demoralized nerves; and with much difficulty we got him to swallow it spoonful by spoonful. He soon gave signs of recovery, and presently, his hands and feet being set free, he asked why the villains before him first half-killed and robbed him, and then came back to cure him.

"O, indeed, dear sir," said Violet, "you wrong them. It is they who have saved both you and me. They have taken all the robbers and bound them hand and foot."

"And where are the villains?" exclaimed the rector furiously, his eyes flashing with revenge.

"Why, parson," said Toon, "we 've got 'um all safe i' the cookin' shop, and there 's a chap stannin' by — he 's a young 'un, too, an' not half the size o' my inches any ways you measures me, — but he 's a cunnin' cove, an' would jist as leave brain 'um all, if they tried to slip the wires, as he 'd shoot a pheasant when the moon shines on the woods that is n't his 'n."

"In the house, do you say?" cried the parson. "Safe bound in the house! Then the Lord be praised! I'll have every one of them hanged."

"The Lord 'ud be very pleased, I maks no doubt," said Toon, "to see himsen praised i' that ere way; an' it 's right that the Lord 's

sarvant should gratify his Lord's appetite when he has the power to do it; 'specially as the chaps is tawnies who don't go to church a Sundays."

"Hold your peace, you heathen!" cried the parson, "and leave the room. I 'm sorry, Miss Violet," he added, "that you have been so much inconvenienced, and have seen me in such a degrading condition. If you also will retire I will rise, and give directions how these men are to be disposed of for the night."

So we all left the room and returned to the kitchen, — whilst Violet went and roused up the frightened servants, and ordered the "John," who yesterday was to have "shown this man the door," to set before us a flagon of the best beer and good beef and bread refreshment.

Whilst we were engaged in discussing the rectory commons, the rector himself walked into the kitchen, — pale and scowling, with revenge and triumph upon every feature.

"So," said he, approaching the trapped foxes, "you 're caught in your villanous practices, are you? You little thought as you ransacked my room and abused my person, that the Lord would raise witnesses against you amongst your own people, and punish you through them for your outrage upon his own anointed servant! Yes, I will hang you all, — even as Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had built for Mordecai the Jew. No mercy, you villains! but death to every one of you, and I shall do you the honor to see your bodies dangle at the good jail of York. You gag and bind me, and rob my house!" he added, grinning savagely and maliciously over the poor devils, who, however, evinced no degree of fright or fear, but laughed scornfully at the pious rector's gesticulations and ravings. "I 'll have the country scoured of your whole breed of vermin; not a man, woman, or child shall escape."

"Hold on there, parson," said big Toon, "an' stop that outlandish jaw, will yer? I won't hear my people called them names, not by you nor no man. You 're a inhuman chap, parson! an' I tells yer so to your face, to talk i' this way to poor devils as your bushnie law 'ul hev to deal wi' so very soon. Leave 'um to the marcies o' the law, parson; they 're not over and above tender bowelled, ain't the bushnie's law, — and hangin' a man ought to be as much satisfaction as a good conscience shud desire. But prehaps you 'd like to hev 'um drawed and quartered to boot. An' if so, jist ax yoursen how you think it would suit your own constitution, parson. Let these chaps hev justice done to 'um; that 's right and proper; but don't

prick 'um to death wi' red-hot needles an' pins. A tawny 'ud scorn to talk to a bushnie as you 've talked to them chaps as is lying down there wi' their hands an' feet tied. An' as for your drivin' us from the country, — is that just? If four tawnies does a wrong thin', don't four other tawnies right it as soon, an' as well as they can? Why condemn a whole race because there is four bad 'uns among 'um? An' I tell you, parson, that we 'se not varmint, — but a old people; old afore your forbears set a foot on this land we now stan's on, — an' I won't hear 'um abused where I am, — an' the chap as says another ill word agin 'um will hev to tek what Gor A'mighty sends him."

The parson winced under Toon's speech, but was too haughty to retract what he had said, or to acknowledge that his evil passions and malicious disposition had led him astray. He was bound to say something, however, in reply, and this is what he said, mending his manners downwards, as a cow's tail grows: "I did not mean any harm to you, good man, for I am much indebted to you; but I desired to impress upon these vile fellows how the providence of God watches over his chosen servants, and punishes those who injure them. As for these men, I hope they will repent before they are called to the bar of God; and I pray that the providence shown to me and my house this night will be a warning to all thieves and wicked men, by showing them that the Lord will surely punish them if they lay their hands on his anointed."

"Well, parson," said Toon, "if you 've done preachin' you 'd better send for the monkeys to take care o' these kiddy hellies. Me and my pals wants to be off."

"O, but you can't go," said the parson. "You must remain at hand until your evidence is taken before the squire."

"But that don't suit us, you see, parson," said Toon. "We 're not goin' to give no evidence, nor do any more nor we 've done already. You 've got the birds, an' you mun keep 'um as you best can."

"But I shall insist upon your remaining; and I will compel you to give evidence against these men. It 's necessary to the prosecution."

CHAPTER XXII.

SEVEN O'CLOCK BEER AT THE GOLDEN LION. — FISHERMEN'S GOSSIP ABOUT THE BURGLARY. — POLLY DRADDA AND HER SON. — BLOODY BELDIN'S CAVE IN THE BOWELS OF THE OLD "COW." — MAD PAUL AND GEORDIE VISIT IT TOGETHER. — PAUL AN OPIUM-EATER. — WHAT THE CAVE CONTAINED. — PAUL'S MAD VISIONS IN IT. — GEORDIE'S BLACK MEERSCHAUM IN MEMORIAM. — CONFUCIUS AND ARJOON, TWO OF PAUL'S GUESTS. — THE BEAUTIFUL GULNARE AND THE COFFEE ON GOLDEN SALVERS. — THE VISION OF THE DREADFUL CLOUDS AND THE RESULT TO POOR PAUL.

A LONG dispute ensued, during which the parson tried hard to bring big Toon to; but it was of no avail; and at last he consented not to call any of us to give evidence, but to let the case rest on the fact of the capture. To this he pledged his word, and we kept watch over the burglars, whilst John aforesaid went for the constable and some of the fishermen, — and when they rang the kitchen bell, we marched quietly back again to the tents, through the front door.

On our way home we had, as the reader may suppose, much talk about the late adventure; and the Grinder, who enjoyed the fun of it amazingly, said he should like no better sport every night in the year. "It beats poaching holler," said he, "and it was as good as a play to see that godly parson lyin' on his back, wi' them ere tiny hedge-stakes gagging his tatur trap." Big Toon, however, was in no laughing mood about it, for he knew what the consequences might be to him and his, and loving his race, he felt sorry and degraded also that any belonging to it should do a criminal deed.

When we arrived at the encampment, I called him on one side, and said: "Ishmael, this is a bad night's work, although I think we've made the best of it; and I am glad that you insisted upon those bold terms with the rector; if you had not, the good man

would have had us all before the assize beak, and I, for one, should have found myself in an unpleasant fix. You know the burglars, you said?"

"Yes, brother, I knows 'um; but the least said 's soonest mended."

"I guess who they are, Ishmael,—I suppose there 's no harm in my guessing?"

"No harm, brother, ony keep it to yoursen, and don't let me hear o' bygones."

"And why not, Ishmael? What have you to fear either from the tawnies who so lately pitched their tents in the Half Moon dingle, so called in the Danes' Dike, or from these burglar tawnies whom we have just left in such good company at the rectory?"

"Nothing to fear, brother,—but much to heed. I see you 've got eyes, brother,—and I does n't want to hear your tongue about this thing. Let it drop."

"As you please, Ishmael. And now, will you do the bushnie a favor before he goes to his house?"

"What is it, brother?"

"Ask granny how it fares with the dark-eyed chi, this morning."

"Good!" said he, "I 'll be back in a minute." So he lifted the canvas of Old Mabel's tent, and called to her in Rommany, where she lay amongst the straw. She replied in the same language; and finding that all was well, I gripped fists with brother Ishmael, and went to lie down in my tent under the beech-tree.

Satan welcomed me as usual. I had desired some of the bolshins to chain him to the door during my absence, and attend to his wants; and "Master Geordie's bulldog" had evidently been well cared for; so we slept lovingly together.

I was at the Golden Lion before seven o'clock that morning, and found the kitchen full of fishermen, who were drinking freely, and talking excitedly about last night's burglary at the rectory.

"Hev you heerd the news, sir?" cried Bill Gibbons, as I entered the room; and before I could answer, a group of the men had gathered round me, anxious to learn whether I knew more or less than they.

"News, Bill!" said I, "what news? Have the French landed on the Headland, or have the rocks swallowed up the North Sea, that you are all so wild this morning?"

"Note o' t' soort, sir," replied Mr. Snorra, lifting his spectacles from his nose, and resting them over his shaggy brows, as if he could see better without them; "but the rectory was brokt into last neet,

and robbed by four gypsy chaps, whose camp lies afore Danes' Dike, an' they 've cotched 'um all alive, as the song says, and are goin' to tak 'um afore t' squire the morn."

"That 's bad news, Mr. Snorra, and I 'm sorry for it. I thought gypsies were n't given to such tricks, and only did a little business in the poaching line, because they had no land of their own, and could n't afford to buy a game license."

"It be all true, nevertheless, sir," rejoined Ben Olaff; "and though we don't like the parson, we would n't see him wranged yer know, if we could help it."

"Right honest, Ben! I 'm sure you would n't, and I respect you all the more for your manly and generous feelings. Fight your foe to the death if need be, on fair ground, with fair and equal weapons; but no false hitting, gouging, knife or revolver practice; and so I hope these rascals will be punished."

"Small fear o' that, sir," said Mr. Snorra, "and Jack Matson, son of old Mat, who was called in to help to teck the gypsies, says that t' parson is goin' to rout the 'campment below afore the day 's out."

"And very right, too, Mr. Snorra, if the burglars belonged to Toon's tribe; for I understand it is Toon's people who lie in the tents down there. But I must say, in justice to them, that they bear a good character all through the country, and this is the first time I 've heard it doubted. Events, however, will show; and as we are met once more so unexpectedly together, I invite you all to drink with me, when I shall be glad to hear the particulars of the robbery. So pray let us be seated, and do you, Bill Gibbons, act as master of the ceremonies, and commander of the beer on this occasion; for, to tell the truth, friends, your landlord is not a man I like to deal with, seeing that he won't give me the commonest civilities for love or money; and I know you chaps can bridle him, and give him measure for measure."

At these words the landlord, who was hard by, blew out his rubicund cheeks, and extended the circuit of his eyes to the dimensions of a Yorkshire teacup, and with one hand on his goodly paunch and the other akimbo, he opened the rusty doors of his mouth and let his ugly voice walk out like a snubbed bully who fain would, but "dasn't."

"Hear the gentleman, yer Flambruffers," said he; "as if a hard word, spoke at neet time to a chap i' the dark or outside t' door, — which is all the same, — ain't a goin' never to be forgiven i' this world! Where does he expect to dee when he goes to? I sud loik

to know if he woin't forgive his enemies? He 's a varry pretty gen-'elman, now, I 'se sure, — an' I 've nowt agin him, an' I hopes he 's nowt agin me arter this. If he hes, why, he mun hev, that 's all; and I does n't care a tinker's dam about him."

"Be civil to him, then, yer unruly brute baste! be civil to the gentleman, I say, old swill-tub! will you," cried Gibbons, "or I 'll drown thee i' one o' thy beer-butts; an' stop thy jaw at this present or thou shall drink a pint o' salt and water wi' a cinder in it. An' now fetch in pints round out o' 'old bott,' — last year's October, mind yer, — an' don't mix it, if thou would n't have thy body tapped o' its oil when thou comes back from t' cellar."

The fat landlord scowled at Bill, and muttered sundry rough oaths as he left the room to execute the order; and the men laughed long and loudly as they seated themselves at the oak tables.

When the drink was supplied and order restored, I learned, what I was most anxious to know, that the men were ignorant of Toon's share in the capture of the burglars. The parson had kept the secret, and it was even said that he himself had taken them all unaided; a fact which raised him considerably in the estimation of the fishermen, and made them all speak of him with respect. I did n't care, therefore, about his threat to break up the encampment, for I knew he would not do that for his own sake; revenge being as dear to a gypsy as a Christian. I did not give him any credit for gratitude, it is true, because he did not know what the thing meant; but he had his instincts of self-preservation, and I depended upon these alone to keep him from any active aggression. So I shortly afterwards left the fishermen to themselves, and ordered breakfast in the "traveller's room."

As I sat at meat, meditating on the things that had passed and were passing around me, some one knocked at the door, and I called upon the person, whoever he was, to come in. It seems I was not heard, for presently the landlord cried out at the top of his voice, "Knock agin, and be dombed to thee! I tell thee he 's in there; don't I? stuffin his hide wi' ham and eggs." So the knock was repeated, and this time I shouted loudly enough for the knocker to enter, which he did, and proved to be the house-boy of the rectory, who had brought me a note from Violet, in which she detailed the occurrences of the previous night, and pleaded sickness for not meeting me to-day as she had promised. "Perhaps," she added, "I may not see you again, dear friend, before I leave these parts; for, indeed, I am terribly shaken by the events of the night, and shall be on my way

to Sherwood to-morrow, at latest, with my aunt. But I shall never forget you, and hold you to your promise to come and see me as soon as you can after your work is finished in the village. And now, dear friend, I want you to execute a commission for me. I am deeply indebted to those brave and good gypsies who so unaccountably came to our rescue, and especially to that gypsy youth I spoke to you about yesterday; and I cannot go away without thanking him and them. I would do so personally if I were able, but I am not; I am too much excited and altogether too unwell. So, I pray you, go to them in my stead, and tell them how grateful I am to them, and how gladly I would serve them. I would send them money; but an action like this could not have been dictated by any mercenary motive, and in my little intercourse with them, I have never found them mercenary. Still, you must judge for me if money would be serviceable to them; in which case pray write me, and they shall have enough to make their whole tribe rich, as they count riches. I am almost ashamed to talk about paying in money for such service as they have rendered me; but how else can I return their kindness? Only by gratitude, and this — one of the most sacred of all feelings — I shall retain for them until death. Tell them so; and speak kindly to the pretty gypsy girl who told my fortune, and tell her if she should ever need a friend or a home, she shall find both in and with me.

"My aunt, who was absent last night, has just returned from Graham Hall, and is so terribly alarmed that she wishes to depart immediately. So, perhaps, we may go to-day. If we should you will write to me constantly, will you not, dear friend? And come to me very soon; for I think life will no longer be sweet and beautiful to me when I am away from you.

"I could say much more, for my heart is full, and longs for that sympathy which I have found only in you; but words will not speak much at the best; and now they seem as if they could say nothing.

"Ever thine, dearest, VIOLET."

My whole frame shook with contending emotions of love, admiration, and disappointment, as I read this confiding, simple, and touching letter. I felt I could not then reply to it, and as the boy was waiting, I wrote a brief answer full of love and sympathy, gladly undertaking the errand which she requested me to perform, and promising to visit her as soon as possible, which, I resolved, should be very soon.

When the boy was gone I fell into a fit of melancholy, — excusable perhaps under the circumstances, — but neither pleasant nor profitable. For what is the good of being down-hearted? I never knew any good come of it; nothing but evil. A man lays himself open to all sorts of inroads from all sorts of enemies when he is down-hearted, and is then an easy prey to the weakest and most vulgar assailants. Keep thy heart up, my brother! always, under all circumstances, — in love, in war, in poverty, distress, and direst misery; for nobody and nothing can hurt thee save thyself; and thou, being strong, art the master of the world. "To be weak is to be miserable," says austere John Milton, "doing or suffering," and the mind can make its own hell or its own heaven. We are all liable to kicks and cuffs, and some of us get much more than our share of these stimulants; but it is better to take them bravely than cowardly. There are wise lessons even in wrong and injustice, for those who can learn them. Is not life a battle and a discipline? Then,

> "Why, soldiers, why,
> Whose duty 't is to die,
> Should we be melancholy boys?"

Thoughts like those ran through my head that morning, after the first storm clouds had passed over me, — and I rose up strong once more. Faith and love took possession of my heart, and drove disappointment and all the mean brood of selfish feeling away from it. I could wait; and he who does not understand the heroism and wisdom of waiting has yet to learn one of the profoundest lessons of life. To quote great John again:

> "They also serve who only stand and wait."

But something must now be done to fill up the long hours of the day. How should I occupy myself now that the hope of the day was gone? All the ordinary ways of employment, and even of amusement, looked dead and barren to me, — and yet something must be done; that I knew. For I had early learned that work, or occupation of some sort or other, was the only thing to keep life sound and sweet; and I never yet met a devil in my path whom I could not drive away from me by minding faithfully my own business. It is astonishing how work strengthens and enables a man, — even the meanest and most dyspeptic; how it kills his bad humors — restores his health, and morals, and intellect, — and places him once more in true communication with man and nature.

So I resolved to occupy myself, at least, for the day. And whilst I was considering how I should do so with most profit to myself, it struck me, suddenly, that I would call and see poor Paul Dradda, whose strange speeches had so alarmed and interested me the night before. Without more ado, therefore, I put on my hat and walked down to the Jolly Pirate.

When I entered the hotel I found Polly at her old post in the chimney corner, smoking her everlasting black pipe, and in precisely the same position as I had twice before seen her. There was a good deal of alteration, however, in the furniture of the room. The walls were hung around with tigers' and lions' skins, and elephants' tusks, with gold-headed bamboo walking-sticks, rich cashmere shawls, rifles, pistols, cutlasses, and an array of pipes and tobacco-pouches which might have furnished the divan of a pasha. The squalor of the room — the bare mud floor — the rough pine settles — the great open chimney — the pewter pots and drinking crockery-ware suspended upon it — old Polly herself — and the variegated cotton curtain hiding her beer-cellar and bed-room as I have before described it — contrasted most strangely with these foreign and costly articles, and gave to the place an appearance of Asiatic barbarism.

I accosted Polly as I entered: "Good morning, mistress Dradda! I see you 've improved your dwelling since I last had the pleasure of paying you a visit; and I 'm glad to learn that your son has returned to comfort your old age."

"An' wat hev ye to do wi' Polly Dradda, an' her son, I sud like to know?" she asked, eying me with no little curiosity, as she drew her pipe from her mouth and suspended smoking for the time. "Wat meks ye tak such an interest i' the ode woman of the beer-house all on a sudden, I wants to know? An' who be yer, mister, that cums wi'out bell, an' meks so free wi' a stranger body's house? I niver seed ye afore that I kens o'; but I suppose ye are like the rest o' t' warld — ye cums to talk grandly to t' ode 'oman now that she's no needen o' your comforts — an' wants none o' your money. But it wain't dew, my fine man, wi' your peacock feathers! It wan't dew! None o' your sawder! If yer wants a quart, out wi' the dubs an' say so; an' there 's your beer. But no gammon, man! no gammon!"

"You mistake me, Polly, altogether," said I. "I don't come to gammon you, and I don't come to drink your beer. But I come to see your son, because I like him, and want to have an hour's talk with him, if he has n't anything better to do, this morning."

"Oh, yer do, do yer? An' who be yer? Tell me that. For my

son ain't a common fisher chap to talk wi' every fine feller who wears a black coat. He 's been to Ingies, my son Paul hes. An' let me tell you, mister, that he 's a reight nabob is Paul! An' he 's more larnin' than ony fiddle-faddle parson, or schule-maester uther i' these parts. An' there ain't one on 'um can talk like him — an' he don't read in t' book as parson does — but spakes all out from his yead. There 's Bill Gibbons now, as is a reight down canny lad, an' kens a few things I 'se a notion, an' Bill was in here the morn, takin' his drinkin's, poor thing — as he alus does, mister — an' no offence to ye unless ye loick to take it — an' says Bill to me, says he, 'Tell yer what it is, Polly, we had a meetin' in t' village last neet about a schoolin' matter for t' men to learn to write and count — and says he your son Paul was clev'est chap there a long chalk, says he: an' made t' parson skake i' his black bones, and skulk off like a dog wi' a tin kettle tied t' his tail.' O, he 's a fine chap, is my Paul! cumed back at last to his ode mother, arter all these lang, lang years!' But he ain't a show-jack, mister, an' I does n't mean he sall mek himsen so cheap as to spake to ivery jackdaw as cums to t' Headland."

"I 'm glad, Polly," said I, "that you think and speak so well of your son, and I like him as well as you do. You asked just now who I was, and I answer that I 'm the man who got up the meeting last night, where your son was and spoke, and where he did me good service."

"You be the gen'leman! You!" cried Polly, rising from her seat, and putting her pipe down on the table. "Lord bless you, mister, why did n't you say so afore? Buss me, mister! Buss me, I say!" she added, flinging her arms round me, and slobbering me with her kisses, in spite of all I could do to prevent her. Then having, as I suppose, satisfied her motherly pride for Paul, in this very pleasant manner to me, she held me at arm's length, and looking lachrymosely into my face, cried, "Why, Lord bless you, mister! my Paul says you are the blessedest man he iver seed i' all his travels." And so, overpowered by her feelings, she sunk into her chair, and seizing the pot of beer on the table, drank deep, down, down amongst the dead men, till she reached the bottom, to refresh herself.

"Well, Polly," said I, after this melo-dramatic exhibition, "where is your son? I hope you will allow me to see him, now you know who I am."

"Won't I?" said she, "wus luck, mister! that I will. Paul Dradda!" she cried aloud, "Paul! Leetle Paul that used to be! Big Paul that is! Cum down, Paul! Here 's a friend o' yourn

cumed to see yer, — him as was wi' ye last neet when yer tooked the shine out o' the parson chap. Paul! I say; do ye hear, Paul! Cum down! cum down!"

I looked about the room, and up at the roof, and everywhere where "up" might be supposed to be, wondering where "up" was, and where "up" at last would prove to be, — when, to my amazement, I beheld two legs dangling over some boards under the rafters, over the chimney, and presently I saw Paul, dressed in the outlandish clothes which he had on last night, sitting bolt up, as if he had just turned out of his bed, and gazing below with wildered and sleepy looks. As soon as he saw me, however, he gave a shout of recognition and ran like a cat down a rope ladder which I had not observed before, and in another instant grasped my hand.

"I 'm glad to see you, sir," said he; "I 've overslept myself this morning, — but I 'm not the less obliged to you for coming and rousing me up."

"I am also glad to see you, Mr. Dradda, and if you have no objection should like your company in a stroll on the beach as soon as you have taken your breakfast."

"T' coffee 's boilin' on t' fire, Paul," said the old woman, "an' all 's ready for your eatins as soon as you 're ready for 'um. I 've a nice stew of hallibut, as was in t' sea the morn, in t' oven, an' sum breadcake not an hour ode. An' if the gen'lemen 'ud loick to join you, Paul, — thou knows he be welcome for thy sake."

"Thank you, Polly," said I, "but I have breakfasted long ago; I'll wait for your son, however, with pleasure," — and without more ado the breakfast was served and eaten.

"Now then, Mr. Dradda," said I, as he rose from the table, "if you have no objection we will go and greet the sea this morning. I love the Headland so much that I am never tired of wandering round it."

"In a moment, sir," said Paul, "in one moment"; and he crossed the room to a little box inlaid with mosaic work, which stood upon a large trunk near Polly's sacred curtain, and applying a key to it, opened it and took therefrom a lump of what I knew to be opium, the size of a man's fist, and setting his teeth to it, cut off a piece as big as a hazel-nut, which he bolted without ceremony. I stared at him in amazement, not unmixed with alarm and even horror; for he had taken a dose enough to kill any dozen men in a normal state. I said nothing, however, and we walked together towards the beach.

"Last night had liked to have been very stormy," said he as we journeyed along. "That parson 's the most impudent fellow ever I saw."

"True," said I; "and last night also he nearly lost his life."

"How so?" he inquired. "The fishermen did n't molest him."

"No, but some rascal gypsies did, for they broke into his house, and gagged him; although, strange to say, every one of them was captured?"

"That 's queer news," he replied, laughing gleefully; "but how — if the parson was gagged and so, as I suppose, disabled — were the robbers caught?"

"That 's more than I can tell. But so I learn it was."

"Then the Lord was more merciful to him than he deserved to have mercy shown him," he replied; "for look you, sir, these men are the weeds of the soil, and choke all the life of the people. I am their enemy, — sworn to be such till I die; for I know there will be no peace nor happiness on the earth so long as they are suffered to cumber it."

I saw that Paul was getting once more on his mad point; so I tried to change the subject.

"Parsons are not so good as they might be," I said, "and to speak truth, I don't think they are much worth talking about any way. But there are many things round the Headland which are truly interesting to me, and will prove more profitable to both of us, I have no doubt, than any talk about your 'blackbirds.' There is one thing especially which I should like to ask you, for example: it is said that Bloody Beldin, the pirate, had a secret cavern amongst the rocks of Flamboro', and that its whereabouts is well known to some of the fishermen. Are you acquainted with it, Mr. Dradda?"

"What put that in your head, sir?" asked he, sharply. "How came you to know anything about the secret cave?"

"I don't know anything about it at present, Mr. Dradda," I replied; "but Bill Gibbons gave me a hint of its existence one day, when he and I were boating together; and I have never forgotten it; and my curiosity is strongly excited to see it, if there be such a cavern in existence."

"Bill was a fool, sir!" he replied, "and must have been mad or drunk when he said anything to lead you to suppose so foolish a story. I tell you he was mad, sir, mad! when he said any such thing. What right had Bill to blab? Oh! oh! Bill Gibbons, you 've

turned traitor, have you? Good! my man! good! But I remember things, sir, which happened here when I was a youth, and nobody ever heard me open my lips about them; no! nor ever will. Paul Dradda does n't peach on his old friends. No, no! not Paul Dradda! Why then Bill Gibbons?"

"But," said I, "Bill Gibbons has n't said anything to impeach anybody. He only hinted, whilst telling me the tale of Bloody Beldin, that possibly such a cave might still be in existence. And trust me, Bill would be the last man in the world to say anything which would compromise his mates."

"I always thought this of him," said Paul; "and so no more about the cave."

"And why not, Mr. Dradda? There 's no harm in the cave, I suppose? and I 've a great curiosity to see it."

"Maybe you have, sir," said Paul, "but without leave I would not, and dare not, show you where it is."

"It 'll be easy enough to get leave, Mr. Dradda, I 've no doubt. And look you! here come Bill Gibbons and Ben Olaff. What if we consult them about it?"

"As you please, sir; if they 've no objection I 've none, you may be sure."

When the matter was put to these worthies, Ben stared wide eyed, as if he did n't believe his ears; and Bill laughed a half-sly, half-foolish laugh, as he took off his sou'wester and scratched his shaggy pate. Presently Gibbons called his mate on one side, and they had a conference together which lasted some minutes; at length they returned, and Olaff said to me, taking me by the button-hole in confidence:

"Sur, I 'se no doubt we can trust yer; but you see it 's a matter o' 'portance is this 'ere cave, to more than twenty on us livin' here i' Flambruf; and if Paul shows you the secret on 't you mun giv your word as a honest gentleman that yer wan't betray us to onybody as to what yer may see i' t' cave, nor show onybody where away the openin' to 't lies. You hear the conditions."

"Yes, Master Olaff, I hear; and I will faithfully preserve your secret."

"All reight," cried he, grasping my hand. "Bill an' I is bound Bridlington way, or we wad join yer; but Paul knows the water tracks. So, good day, sir."

"Good day, Master Olaff. And I say, Bill, have you got no word of greeting for a body before we part? Nothing but a grin? Or

do you think that the seven o'clock ale this morning was greeting enough for one day?"

"Lord bless you, sir," said Bill, "I was a greetin' on yer all the time, an' larfin' i' my sleeve to think how you hev but cumed down upon me about the cave. Who 'd a thote now that a idle word — spoke i' the windin's of a tale about Bloody Beldin — wad ha' set you so soon on the trail o' that ole hidin' place of hisen?"

"My ears are always open, Bill, you see, and few things escape me worthy to be noted when I am talking to a man. You won't repent letting me see the cave, however, Bill; and I already begin to smell the rat you've got stowed away there. So once more, good day to you both."

Paul and I now made the best of our way down to the beach, and shoving a boat into the water, we each took an oar and pulled round the south rocks towards the main head.

When we arrived within about four hundred yards of the lighthouse, which was situated on the most commanding height, nearly five hundred feet above us, Paul rested on his oar and began to reconnoitre.

"Look you, sir," he said, "those two savage rocks standing together in that little inlet, surrounded by those monstrous overhanging cliffs, are called the "Cow and Calf." You see how the water has cut them into arches and caverns, and how grand they look in the morning sunlight, set off by those dense masses of shadow. You would n't think now that there was anything like a big cave — bigger than Robin Lithe's — under the carcass of the old Cow, would you?"

"I certainly see no sign of a big cave, Mr. Dradda," said I; "suppose, however, that we pull nearer to them; perhaps, I may then find it out."

"No you won't, sir; not if you looked till you were blind," said he, dropping his oar into the water, and giving way with a will. "Now, sir," he continued, as we came alongside them, "here we are, and here is the old 'Cow,' — see then what you can discover."

I looked carefully from the boat into every opening of the rocks, but found no sort of clew to the entrance of the cave.

"Does the entrance lie on this side the old Brahmin, Mr. Dradda?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "not ten yards from the bows."

I looked again eagerly, and with no small curiosity; but was again at fault, and so gave it up.

"Then I must show you the secret of the robber's cave myself," said Paul. "There 's no 'open sesame,' no magic necessary to enter it. But you 'd better be taking off your clothes, sir; for we shall have to dive some way below here before we reach the gates."

I looked at him with doubtful eyes, wondering if his madness had suddenly returned to him; and then remembering the large dose of opium which he had taken, I bethought me that the illusions of the drug were perhaps working upon his imagination, and cheating him out of the reality of his surroundings. He began, however, very coolly to examine the rocks, — as if for some secret marks to indicate the position of the cave under the deep, if cave there really were, — and so I said to him:

"Dive, Mr. Dradda! What do you mean? You are surely not in earnest? How can you enter a cave by diving under the water?"

"Good!" said Paul to himself, as he concluded his examination. "Now, sir, here 's the marks, look you! From this jagged line to that is a distance, you see, of about eight feet; and between these lines lies the mouth of the cave, which, at low water, as it now is, is not more than three feet below the surface. What we have to do is to dive to that depth, and then swim straight ahead a dozen strokes, and on rising to the surface, we shall be in Bloody Beldin's cave."

I confess I was still very incredulous, — but Paul spoke evidently in good faith, sincerely believing his own words, and as he immediately began to undress I followed his example. He presently let go the anchor about five yards from the rock that we might get a greater impetus, as he said, when we plunged from the boat.

"Mr. Dradda," said I, "the only thing I 'm afraid of in this adventure is, that we shall find it considerably cold inside the Cow's bowels — and I don't see how we can get any dry rigging to clothe ourselves with, when we land in those regions."

"O!" said Paul, laughing, "I dare say Father Neptune, or some other good chap, has provided for such a difficulty. Are you ready, sir?"

"Quite," said I. "So dive away, and I will follow you in a second."

"Here goes, then!" cried Paul, and down he went. I followed him after the lapse of a few moments, and swam rapidly out, until I thought I had gone far enough; then rising, I found myself, sure enough, in a cave of enormous height and dimensions, lighted from

the top by a natural circular opening. Paul was swimming a few yards ahead, and called on me to follow in his wake. I did so until we came to a rude stair leading to a platform, which, as I afterwards learned was above water mark at high tide. As I expected, the cold damp of the cavern struck into my very bones, and made my teeth chatter again.

"Where 's Father Neptune's rigging, good Mr. Dradda?" quoth I, as we mounted the platform. "I hope he has n't forgotten to supply his wardrobe, for I 'm freezing to death."

"He used to keep twenty or thirty suits in a place I know of in times gone by, sir," he added; "and I 've no doubt he 's as generous and hospitable as ever he was. Follow on, sir, and we shall soon see."

With that he led me, under a low arch, to another cave, or rather room in the cave — in which I was surprised to find a considerable number of coarse wooden chairs, tables, chests, spirit kegs, and various kinds of fire-arms, swords, and cutlasses. The walls were hung round with double linings of canvas, evidently ships' sails which had seen good service before they were put to their present use. Paul immediately opened one of the chests and drew from it a couple of Guernsey jackets and flannel drawers, two large pea-jackets and two pairs of pants; which we severally and speedily appropriated.

"And now," said Paul, "for a glass of the real Hollands to keep the fire burning, for sure enough it 's a very cold climate, is this of Bloody Beldin and Father Neptune."

So he turned the tap of one of the spirit kegs, and holding under it a tin cup which was suspended from the barrel-head by a string, he filled it and drained the contents. I also drank a hearty draught, for though I am a cold-water man, I never allow any crotchet to ride me to death, and much good the generous Hollands did me, and thank you, Mister Hollands.

"If we could only find some shoes and stockings," said Paul, "we should be all right — and whilst I overhaul these other chests, sir, suppose you try and light a fire. There 's plenty of wood in yon corner, you see, and though it 's no doubt damp enough, there 's a tar and sawdust mixture — which you 're sure also to find there — as will make it burn in a jiffy."

The romance of the thing, as well as the pleasure of sitting by a good fire in a cave under the sea, pleased me much, and in a short time I succeeded in kindling a blaze which lit up the old rocks with a cheerful warmth, subduing somewhat their aboriginal savageness,

whilst it heightened the picturesqueness of the scene. I stood for some time watching the smoke as it rose high up the cavern, now gathering together in dense volumes, and now scattering in graceful sweeps its floating outline of shadow, until it mingled at last with the blue of heaven as it escaped through the far-off opening at the summit. Whilst I was thus engaged Paul had found both shoes and stockings, — and, what was quite as welcome to me, a couple of black clay pipes, and a large plug of Cavendish tobacco. He then replenished the tin can, and cutting the string which held it, brought it in his hand to the fire, and we sat down together.

"Well, Paul," said I, "this is the most romantic of all my adventures in these parts, although I 've had some notable ones, I assure you. So the fishermen use this cave to keep their black ware in, do they, and cheat the excise?"

"You see, sir, with your own eyes," said he, "what it 's used for; and a mighty snug shop it be. I once saw a similar entrance to a cavern in one of the Tonga Islands, where Mr. Mariner lived so long, but barring that, never heard of another but this."

"Nor I, Paul; but is there no other entrance to it?"

"You may depend upon 't there is," he replied, "or how would the chaps get their lumber into the hold! They don't bring it down through yonder skylight," he added, pointing to the roof.

"No, Paul, I don't suppose they do."

"And yet they do get it here, nevertheless," said he, — "and more I have n't to communicate at present."

"Very well, Paul, then let us fill our pipes."

When the weed was cut and lighted, I said: "These be black Jacks, these pipes be, Mr. Dradda — and if the tobacco which has been smoked in them had paid duty, the revenue would have been improved a little, I 'm thinking. But I 've got a blacker pipe than either of them at the Golden Lion; a meerschaum which I 've smoked these fourteen years."

"I should like to see it, sir," he replied, "for you see pipes are my hobby, and I 've got some at the Jolly Pirate, which are worth a sight of money; and it does one good to sit at ease and blow a cloud of smoke out of 'um. I see strange things in the smoke sometimes, sir; fiery salamanders; dusk demons, whose eyes glare forth the immortality of hell; Indian gods; crocodiles; Yogees, whose hair has grown into the earth round the roots of trees from their long sitting and watching and meditation; grinning Chinese men, and laughing apes and mocking-birds, and unearthly sexless beings, who utter

wild cries, and threnes dreadful enough to appal the hearts of the damned. And then again I see such glorious things, that words cannot paint them, and I sit for whole hours motionless, and absorbed in the contemplation of their beauty."

"Did you ever eat opium, Mr. Dradda?" I asked, as if I were ignorant of the fact.

"Why do you ask?" he replied, eying me with curiosity, if not with suspicion.

"Because a mere tobacco-smoker could not see such visions as you describe — as the effects of his smoking. But an opium-eater may."

"So may a hashish-smoker, for that matter," said Paul; "and as you ask the question, I will tell you plainly that I do eat opium. I learned the magic trick, you see, in India, where everybody eats opium or betel-nuts or hashish."

"And how much may you eat in a day now, Mr. Dradda?"

"More and less. Never less than a lump of the crude equal to five thousand drops of laudanum." *

"I don't wonder you see all those queer sights, Mr. Dradda. I think I shall stick to my little black meerschaum and my tobacco, and not run the risk of making my smoke populous with the horrors of opium."

"It is best to do so, sir," he added, sadly; "for opium might make you mad, as it does me sometimes."

He then told me the history of his opium experience; how he began with small doses at Calcutta; how the hunger for it increased within him, day by day, until at last it became as necessary to him as his daily food.

This relation, which was a pretty long one, excited him so much that I was fearful he would break out into one of the mad fits which he had confessed himself subject to. So I proposed to repeat to him some lines addressed to my little black meerschaum, which a good parson gave to me so long ago, thinking the change of subject would divert and calm his mind. He said he should like to hear them, and so I repeated them from memory. Here they are:

* Thomas De Quincey drank eight thousand drops of laudanum per day for nearly three years. Enough for nearly four hundred men, at the rate of twenty-five drops per man.

GEORDIE TO HIS TOBACCO-PIPE.

I.

Good pipe, old friend, old black and colored friend,
  Whom I have smoked these fourteen years and more,
My best companion, faithful to the end,
  Faithful to death, through all thy fiery core!

How shall I sing thy praises, or proclaim
  The generous virtues which I 've found in thee?
I know thou carest not a whit for fame,
  And hast no thought but how to comfort me,

And serve my needs, and humor every mood;
  But love and friendship do my heart constrain
To give thee all I can for much of good,
  Which thou hast rendered me in joy and pain.

Say, then, old honest meerschaum! shall I weave
  Thy history together with my own?
Of late I never see thee but I grieve
  For him whose gift thou wert — forever gone!

Gone to his grave amidst the vines of France;
  He, all so good, so beautiful and wise!
And this dear giver doth thyself enhance,
  And makes thee doubly precious in mine eyes.

For he was one of Nature's rarest men,
  Poet and preacher, lover of his kind,
True-hearted man of God! whose like again,
  In this world's journey I may never find!

I know not if the shadow of his soul,
  Or the divine effulgence of his heart,
Has through thy veins in mystic silence stole,
  But thou to me dost seem of him a part.

His hands have touched thee, and his lips have drawn,
  As mine, full many an inspiring cloud
From thy great burning heart, at night and morn,
  And thou art here, whilst he lies in his shroud!

And here am I, his friend and thine, old pipe!
  And he has often sat my chair beside,
As he was wont to sit in living type,
  Of many companies the flower and pride!

Sat by my side, and talked to me the while,
  Invisible to every eye, save mine,
And smiled upon me as he used to smile,
  When we three sat o'er our good cups of wine.

Ah! happy days, when the old Chapel House,
  Of the old Forest Chapel, rang with mirth,
And the great joy of our divine carouse,
  As we hob-nobbed it by the blazing hearth!

We never more, old pipe, shall see those days,
  Whose memories lie like pictures in my mind;
But thou and I will go the self-same ways,
  E'en though we leave all other friends behind.

And for thy sake, and for my own, and his,
  We will be one, as we have ever been;
Thou dear old friend, with thy most honest phiz,
  And no new face shall come our loves between!

II.

Thou hast thy separate virtues, honest pipe!
  Apart from all the memory of friends;
For thou art mellow, old, and black, and ripe,
  And the good weed that in its smoke ascends,

From thy rare bowl, doth scent the liberal air,
  With incense richer than the woods of Ind.
E'en to the barren palate of despair—
  (Inhaled through cedar-tubes from glorious Scinde!)

It hath a charm would quicken into life,
  And make the heart gush out in streams of love,
And the earth, dead before, with beauty rife,
  And full of flowers as heaven of stars above.

It is thy virtue and peculiar gift,
  Thou sooty wizard of the potent weed;
No other pipe can thus the soul uplift,
  Or such rare fancies and high musings breed.

I've tried full many of thy kith and kind,
  Dug from thy native Asiatic clay,
Fashioned by cunning hand, and curious mind,
  Into all shapes and features, grave and gay.

Black niggers' heads, with their white-livered eyes,
  Glaring in fiery horror through the smoke;
And monstrous dragons, stained with bloody dyes,
  And comelier forms; but all save thee I broke!

For though, like thee, each pipe was black and old,
  They were not wiser for their many years;
Nor knew thy sorcery, though set in gold,
  Nor had thy tropic taste — these proud compeers!

Like great John Paul, who would have loved thee well,
  Thou art the "only one" of all thy race;
Nor shall another comrade near thee dwell,
  Old king of pipes! my study's pride and grace!

III.

Thus have I made assurance doubly sure,
  And sealed it twice — that thou shalt reign alone!
And as the dainty bee doth search for pure,
  Sweet honey, till his laden thighs do groan

With their sweet burden, tasting nothing foul;
  So thou of best tobacco shalt be filled;
And when the starry midnight wakes the owl,
  And the lorn nightingale her song has trilled,

I, with my lamp and books, as is my wont,
  Will give thee of the choicest of all climes —
Black Cavendish, full-flavored, full of juice,
  Pale Turkish, famed through all the Osman times;

Dark Latakia, Syrian, Persia's pride,
  And sweet Virginian, sweeter than them all!
O, rich bouquet of plants! fit for a bride,
  Who, blushing, waits the happy bridegroom's call.

And these shall be thy food, thy dainty food,
  And we together will their luxury share;
Voluptuous tumults stealing through the blood —
  Voluptuous visions filling all the air!

I will not thee profane with impious Shag,
  Nor poison thee with Nigger-head and Twist,
Nor with Kentucky, though the planters brag
  That it hath virtues all the rest have missed.

These are for porters, loafers, and the scum,
  Who have no sense for the diviner weeds;
Who drink their muddy beer, and muddier rum,
  Insatiate, like dogs, in all their greeds.

But not for thee, nor me, these things obscene;
  We have a higher pleasure, purer taste.
My draughts have been with thee of hypocrene,
  And our delights intelligent and chaste.

IV.

Intelligent and chaste since we have held
  Commune together in the world's highway;
No Falstaff failings have my mind impelled
  To do misdeeds of sack by night or day;

But we have ever erred on virtue's side —
  At least we should have done — but, woe is me,
I fear in this my statement I have lied;
  For ghosts, like moonlight shadows on the sea,

Crowd thick around me from the shadowy past,
  Ghosts of old memories reeling drunk with wine!
And boon companions Lysius-like, and vast
  In their proportions as the god divine.

I do confess my sins, and here implore
  The aid of "Rare Old Ben" and other ghosts,
That I may sin again but rarely more,
  Responsive only unto royal toasts.

For save these sins, I am a saintly man,
  And live like other saints on prayer and praise;
My long race longer, if life be a span,
  Than any two lives in these saintly days.

So let me smoke, and drink, and do good deeds,
  And boast the doing like a Pharisee;
Am I not holy if I love the creeds,
  Even though my drinking sins choke up the sea?

When I had finished my recitation about the black meerschaum, Paul started up with wild, staring eyes, and exclaimed: "Hurrah there! we 're going to make the rocks literary; these rocks that have hitherto echoed only to the roaring and rioting of drunken smugglers. Now we 'll have all the great men and gods of the East here, and they shall talk to us, and read their sacred books to us, and we will be drunk with the wine of the soul. See, sir," he added, approaching me with great politeness and bowing as he spoke; "this is Confucius, this bald-headed gentleman here, with the great, calm face and eyes. I made his acquaintance five hundred years before the Christ you worship was born, — when I was travelling, a poor scholar, from the great Bardic Institution of Britain. Let me introduce you, sir. A fine man is Confucius, I assure you, sir; and a great moralist and lawgiver. Pray be seated, good Confucius! This is a gentleman whose name I forget, but somehow or other he is with

me here, to-day, and I want you to know how finely he can talk about a black tobacco-pipe. Sir," turning to me, "won't you speak to Confucius?"

"Certainly," said I, "Mr. Dradda," not a little alarmed to find myself alone in this cave under the sea with a madman, for it was clear that the opium had begun to work upon Paul's imagination, and had deprived him of his reason. "Certainly," said I. "I will speak to him. How fares it with you most learned and devout Confucius! Your wise books have travelled a long way westwards, and you have many sincere admirers in this island who regard you with reverence. I for one, am your humble servant, and should be glad to talk with you awhile, if you have no objection. I want to know something about the state of civilization in China at the time you lived and taught in that wonderful old empire. Will you deign, sir, to reply to me?"

I waited for several minutes, my eyes on Paul all the time. At length I said: "I can get no answer from your friend, Paul. I presume, therefore, that he does not wish to converse with so illiterate a man as I am."

"It 's very unmannerly of him," said Paul. "But no matter, he 'll come to by and by. Here now, here is another friend of mine, an ancient Indian god, by name Arjoon, — whose history is written in the Bhagvat Geeta, which is, as you know, sir, an episode to the great Indian epic poem called the Mahabburratt. He is a Sanscrit god, is Arjoon. Will you ask him a question, sir?"

"To be sure I will; and as he looks like a mild, gentle youth, I've no doubt he will be more civil than your other friend from China. I have heard of you, O Arjoon!" said I; "and have read all the philosophy and metaphysics and morals which were taught to you on those Indian plains, in the presence of the armies of your enemy. Do you still think that fighting is an evil thing?"

I again paused for an answer, and Paul got angry with his Indian friend because he also refused to speak.

"You see, Mr. Dradda," I said, "it 's no use for such chaps as you and me to talk to these gods and great men. We had better by half sit down quietly and have a talk to ourselves."

"Very well," said Paul. "This is one of my best palaces, and I 'm well enough contented to dwell in it, and entertain my friends. But I don't like those uncivil gentlemen who are standing there, and would n't reply to civil questions. Perhaps," said Paul, addressing his shadowy guests, "you will take a seat at the fire, and I will order you to be served with coffee, unless you prefer a smuggler's canful of Hollands gin, — which is no bad stuff, — although it may n't suit

such worships as you. That 's right; I 'm glad to see you sit down. Will you take coffee? Very good. What ho, there!" he cried, "without there! Bring in coffee at once, on the gold salvers."

"I should prefer a little of the gin and water, if you please, Mr. Dradda," said I, for I still felt cold and chilly in spite of the fire.

"Who do you call Mr. Dradda, slave?" he cried, grinding his teeth. "Know, fellow! that I am the Pasha of India! and only tolerate your presence until I can find my cimeter to kill you."

"Most high and mighty prince!" said I, "pardon a hasty expression in thy servant; and as for his life, he well knows it is in your highness's hands, and you can do with him as seemeth you good."

I resolved, however, to keep a sharp look-out, and to take care he did n't lay his hands on the cimeter to take away my life. He had no time for reply, however, for before I had done speaking, a troop of beautiful girls entered, attending the bearer of the coffee on the golden salvers. So he said; and forthwith began to dally with them.

"Come hither to me, O beautiful Gulnare," he said, grasping a shadowy waist. "Lift up your eyes, so black and bright, like liquid diamonds! and let me gaze into their deeps forever. Press your red lips, like full-blown roses, to mine, that we may kiss until we die! Ha!" he exclaimed, rising with demoniac fury in his gestures, and thrusting the beautiful Gulnare away from him, "what devil 's this that thou art changed into, thou false witch of the pit! What ugliness and horror are in all thy features and lineaments! What foul deformity in thy person! Out of my presence to the damned ye come from!" And then, his eyes staring on vacancy, as if they would burst from their sockets, his face bathed in perspiration, and shining in the firelight with that peculiar glimmer which opium alone produces, and his hair literally standing upright on his head, he asked in a subdued, deep, sepulchral voice, his whole body heaving in the convulsions of his agony: "What is this dreadful upheaving within me, as if the universe were in its last throes, and all the pain thereof were sent shivering into my heart and soul? What mean these vast processions of clouds, all black and horrible, — these merciless clouds, — like the pageantry of some dreadful unnamable funeral? And why drag me after you, O merciless, dreadful clouds! Let me go! Leave me on the earth, for I am mad and cannot follow you. I am sick and dizzy at this height of your travel. Hold! hold! I topple over your sides — down, down through the star regions — through gulfs of darkness — down, down, forever and forever."

So ending his wild speech, the unhappy man fell on the rocky floor, as I thought, in a fit of apoplexy.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PAUL'S OPIUM MADNESS IN BLOODY BELDIN'S CAVE. — GEORDIE'S ENCOUNTER WITH MAD PAUL. — BILL GIBBONS AND BEN OLAFF TO THE RESCUE. — BEN OLAFF ON THE OPIUM DRUNK AND DRINKING. — CARRYING PAUL THROUGH THE DAMP, DARK SEA-GALLERY.

FINDING that Paul gave no signs of speedy recovery, I lit my pipe, and sat and watched beside him, feeling his pulse every now and then to assure myself that he was not off into the land of dreams. It was no pleasant situation to be left in, however, and I felt the full misery of it. I do not think I am a coward, either physically or morally, but I hate death and the semblance of death, — and I hate both more than I fear them. It is a kind of loathing with me, which sometimes makes me savage, as if I had been the sufferer of some great wrong; and I dislike to go near a corpse or any person in an abnormal state, — in a fit, for example, although I have more than a dozen times in my life conquered my feelings when I have met people by the roadside in a state of epilepsy, and brought them safely out of their miserable condition.

So it was with me at present, and with respect to Paul. I could not leave him, and yet I hated to stay with him. It was a struggle between conscience and mere feeling, and conscience got the victory, as it always ought to do. Poor devil! how could I leave him here, under the sea, with no one to take care of him. True, he had threatened to take my life, and I honestly believe he would, in his fanatical, hallucinatory feeling, have done so, if he had had the chance; but that was no apology for me in any neglect I might show him, because he was not master of his own mind and will. So I resolved to stay by him to the last.

How many hours he slept I know not; but he must have worn the day wellnigh out, — and I was getting dreadfully weary, — when on a sudden, he roused himself and sat bolt upright, asking in amazement, as he gazed around the cave, where he was, and why he was

brought to this horrible and dreary place. I explained as I best could; but he swore he had never seen me before, and that I must have brought him there to murder him. In vain I attempted to convince him to the contrary, — he grew more and more arbitrary, savage and vindictive. At last he rose from the floor, and catching a rusty sword which hung on the opposite wall, made a thrust at me with all the force and power of his body; but I was luckily prepared for him, and had hung a rapier to my side directly after he fell into the fit, which I now drew, and parried his lunge, much to his astonishment. In another instant I had knocked his weapon out of his hand, and seizing his right wrist I felled him like an ox, holding the point of my instrument close to his heart, and threatening him with instant death, if he moved a limb. This had the effect I desired, and he crouched on the rocks like a beaten spaniel.

Whilst I was wondering what the end of all this would be, I heard a shout in the cavern below which made my heart beat quicker time than it had done for many years before. I was not slow to answer it, as you may suppose, and before I had an opportunity to go out and meet the incomers, who should appear before me but Bill Gibbons and Ben Olaff, — wet, cold, and shivering, — calling aloud for Guernsey jackets, and the proper rigging of a man.

I was too glad to see them to speak much; but I handed them a can of good Hollands as quickly as I could draw it, and they soon helped themselves to sufficient clothing from the chests.

"What 's the matter, sir?" said Bill Gibbons, as he saw Paul's position on the floor. "Is Paul four sheets i' the wind?"

"No, Bill," I said, "but there 's an opium devil in him, which nothing but a good licking can allay."

"How say you?" asked Ben Olaff, "an opium devil! What kind of a devil is that?"

"Have you never heard of an opium devil, Mr. Olaff?" quoth I. "Then you 're a lucky man; and I hope you may never know more about the animal than you see here at present."

"But what 's it all mean, sir?" he rejoined. "I does n't understand yer?"

"Mean," said I, "why that our foreign friend here is mad drunk with opium."

"Drunk with opium!" exclaimed Ben, in unfeigned astonishment, "what kind of a drunk is that?"

"Well, Mr. Olaff, you see the kind of drunk that it is before you."

"But may the devil take me, if I understand it," quoth innocent

Ben. "I knows all about drunk with beer, and the spirituous articles, — but drunk with opium! that bangs my experience, considerable!"

I tried to explain; but in no way could I make honest Ben understand what being drunk with opium was. He had never heard of such a thing. So failing to comprehend the matter, he and Bill betook themselves to the Hollands, once more, in grim earnest.

"How long now," said Ben, after a deep drain of the potent fluid, "may this chap hev laid here?"

"Not five minutes — this time — before you came so opportunely to my assistance, Mr. Olaff; but I have no doubt whole hours before; the opium, you see, made him mad, and he took me for a man who had brought him into this cave to murder him. So I could do nothing less than squelch him, to save myself; for look you! he set upon me with that rusty sword which I had the good fortune to knock out of his hand."

"Well, that's a rum un!" cried Gibbons, evidently tickled with the story. "Who'd a thote that sich a thing as that would hev happened down here, and that Paul should hev been drunk wi' opium to do it?"

"I never thought it, you may depend upon it, Master Gibbons, or you would n't have caught me here," quoth I. "But, what's to be done with the man? and how are we to get him into the boat? Can either of you cunning chaps tell me?"

"That'll be easy enough by and by," said Ben, "as soon as the dark mother hangs out her blanket; but not afore; case, you see, there's all soorts o' eyes about these rocks an' waters, an' it would n't dew to 'lighten 'um wi' our secrets."

"Mayhap he'll get sober agin soon," suggested Gibbons, taking a fresh draught of Hollands; "an' if he should n't, it's none so bad bein' here, as I knows on, wi' plenty to eat and drink, a good fire to warm at, and good mates to talk to."

"But I'm tired of being here, friend Gibbons," said I, "and as for waiting till Paul gets sober, that's out of the question. He will be stationary drunk I tell you these ten hours yet."

"Ten hours!" cried Ben in astonishment, opening wide his eyes, and turning the mighty quid of tobacco which he had in his jaws; "ten hours, sir, do you say? why that's three times as long as ever I was drunk i' my life. I meks it a pint o' conscience to gradeate the scale, you see sir, I does. If I gets drunk on beer, I says to my-

sen, says I, teck two hours, Ben, to sleep thysen sober; an' if I gets drunk wi' liquor, I allows a half-hour extra. Could n't afford no more time nor that for a single drunk. It would n't pay, sir. T' fishin' 'ud go to ruin, else; and then I wants to know what 'ud become o' the wife and bairns? Ten hours!" he added with an expression of indignation and contempt in his face and mouth, — "why, sir, what a unconscienced drunk that be! There 's no reason in 't; an' if I was Paul, there, I 'd cut down the time considerable. I would n't stan' it. I 'd make my bargains wi' the drug. Now says I: if I tek so much o' you, you teks so many hours sleep o' me. Not a minit more! or you an' me quits company. Is n't I reight, sir?"

"It would be all right enough, Mr. Olaff, if the thing were possible; but it is n't. Opium drunk will have its own run of time, and won't hear of bargaining. I like your graduated scale of hours to get sober in, in the matter of the beer and spirituals, though, exceedingly. It is both economical and philosophical, and does you, Mr. Olaff, a great deal of credit; although I think it would be better not to get drunk at all."

"Then a man must n't drink at all," said Ben; "for I tell you, who knows, sir, that t' best man as ever walked, wot drinks at all, is liable to git beyont the mark at times, though he may n't mean it, the chap! Not he. There 's extra good company, or extra good drinkin' stuff, or a man's in'ards is out o' order, or summuts or other, which is sure to catch him one of them fine days or nights. Now, I likes drink, 'case it meks a chap jolly, an' keeps his heart up, and meks him friendly wi' his neibors, an' a well-wisher to all o' mankind in general. So you see, sir, I 'se willin' to teck penalty sumtimes, and get drunk. That 's my doctrine."

"Well, Ben, it 's honest speech any way; and honest speech is a jewel, as the world goes in our time. I won't quarrel with you about your drinking, Mr. Olaff, nor reason with you about it; for every man must go his own ways and pay his penalty, or take his reward."

"Good health, sir," cried Ben, as Bill Gibbons handed him the tin can, slapping him on the shoulder with a hearty slap, and a great grin of satisfaction on his face, — saying to him at the same time:

"Odd 's blood, Ben! thou 'se a good 'un, — thou is! thou can talk better nor ony Methodyke i' thy chapel."

And Ben coolly swallowed his gin, and returned the cup to his mate with an air of much complacency, as who should say:

"What thou say'st, Bill, is quite true, and I knows it."

"And now, good fellows," quoth I, "pray tell me what is to be done with Paul? for I want to see daylight once more. Can you get him out of the cavern without dragging him after you under the water, and drowning him during the process?"

"How do ye think we got them ere kegs o' Hollands, and other things which you hevn't seen, into t' cave if we can't?" asked Mr. Olaff, with a knowing leer on his face. "Tew be sure we can, sir; but I ain't goin' for t' say it 'll be a easy job, 'case, you see, Paul 'll hev to be lowered a hite of sum twenty yards into t' boat."

"I don't see how that 's to be done," I rejoined, "without danger to the poor fellow's life; and I 'd rather remain with him here myself, until that opium devil leaves him, than put him to such risk."

"There 's no risk in it, I assures you, sir," said Ben. "I 've gone down them rocks from t' big hoile many 's the time, and sall agin, I hope. We keeps everything proper to lower both man and goods i' this ere cave; and once git Paul into the lubber's hammock, as we calls the fine goods cradle, an' no fear o' him."

"But the boats, Mr. Olaff! How shall we get the boats up to the 'big hoile,' as you call it? I suppose 't' hoile' is n't above the deep sea entrance, is it?"

"Not so, sir," said Ben; "it lies on t' other side the Ode Cow's carcass, and Bill here 'ul soon hev um round, if so be we is to get Paul out that way."

"Get him out in any safe way, Mr. Olaff, and I am ready to help you."

"I' that case, Bill," said he, "thou 'd better be off an' pull the boats round the south pint, while me and the Leeds genleman puts Paul into t' hammock. It must be gettin' dark outside."

"Ay, ay, captain!" said Bill; "I 'll be off in a twinklin'; but hev a care o' Paul, Captain Olaff; for, mark my words, you 'll hev no easy job wi' him if he should waken out o' his drunk."

Saying which Bill took another "long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether" at the Hollands, and presently, leaving the cave's properties behind him, he darted off, his grim nakedness illuminated by the red firelight until he vanished into the darkness like one of Dante's hellians.

"Now then, sir," said Mr. Olaff, "smoke your pipe awhile, till I goes to the gear trap to fetch the lubber's hammock, and the ropes."

With that he left me alone once more with Paul, who, from the moment that he felt himself at the mercy of his antagonist in the sword encounter, had, as I said, crouched upon the rocks, and gone off again into another immensity of dream and horror. I pitied the poor fellow from my heart. It was a sorrowful sight to see so fine a man as he was naturally the slave of an infernal drug, from whose thraldom there was no possibility of release. I had n't much time, however, for reflection or sympathy, as Ben speedily reappeared with his coils and trappings, and we as speedily bagged Paul in the aforesaid lubber's hammock, which was a kind of sack, open only at one end, and attached to ropes sufficiently long to reach the sea from the upper mouth of the cavern, — twenty yards from the sea level, as Mr. Olaff said. The smugglers used this apparatus to lower their choicest stuffs into the boats, for retransportation and inland sale, after the dry goods bales had been duly examined for this purpose in the cave; and it was called the lubber's hammock because some of the less hardy and experienced sailors occasionally used it in rough weather, as being safer and more secure than the single noose of the precarious rope, commonly employed to raise and lower the men over the terrible and precipitous rocks.

Paul was in a dead sleep when we packed him up, and now his head only was visible.

"Lay hold on him, sir," said Ben, when we had completed our arrangements, "and be careful how you steps, for we 've got some dark and slippery places to go through, afore we reaches t' hoile."

"I 'll be as careful as I can, Mr. Olaff, and shall have to trust to you to call out when there 's any danger nigh."

"Come on then," said Ben; and we lifted Paul in his hammock and bore him away through a long, dark, and jagged gallery, which seemed to me as if it had no end; for I have noticed that distance multiplies itself tenfold to a man who is travelling in the dark, and that he loses all idea of the flight of time.

I have read somewhere of a person who, for the sake of experiment, shut himself up in a solitary and perfectly dark cell, where he was kept two hours, and when he was released he imagined he had been there for days. And as we stumbled along this dark, damp, and dripping gallery, and before we had got half way through it, — the total length being a hundred and eighty-five yards, — I thought we must have travelled a mile at least. More than once we had to lay Paul down on the rocks to rest ourselves, and dreary work it was, I assure you. I could feel the darkness, it was so thick and pal-

pable. I trusted to Ben, however, and kept a good heart over it. Once I asked him:

"How near now to the end, Mr. Olaff?"

"A big piece yet, sir!" was the reply.

Each word sounded muffled and hollow to my ears, and more distant, also, by far than it really was, as if the vaulted rocks were jealous of the true ring of the human voice, and exulting in their cryptic power, changed the natural utterance of it into an unnatural, ghastly, and ghoul-like expression. Ben spoke to me as if he were half smothered at the farther end of some obscene sepulchre, and I did not care to continue the conversation. To add to the annoyance, and I had almost said horror of the passage, I was flouted continually by bats, whose wings struck me several times in the face, and on my arms and shoulders. At last, to my great joy, a dim light, — not the "dim religious light" of Keats, — but a dim light, nevertheless, from Heaven, broke faintly upon the darkness of our way; and as we advanced I saw, looking through the vista of rocks, a blue sky in the distance, dotted with stars; and silently, and with deep, intense gratitude, I thanked God in my heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HIS DEPOSIT IN THE LUBBER'S HAMMOCK. — LOWERING OF HIM OVER THE DREADFUL ROCKS. — HIS AWAKENING. — TUMBLES INTO THE SEA BELOW.

"YON 'S the light o' t' hoile, sir," cried Ben, as the first glimmering of it burst upon us. "We 've no sich lang way to go now; and t' spake truth I 'm glad on 't. I 'se no objections to roll a barrel o' whiskey or good Hollands along that snaky passage we 've jist cumed thruf when there 's plenty o' chaps about, an' lots o' torches; but it 's a different matter, mark you, Mister Leeds Gentleman, to lug a opium drunk man thruf it, i' the dark, wi' them d—d bats a flyin' i' your face every minit by the way! Howsumdever, here we be's! an' so let us land our cargo an' rest our weary banes."

"I 'm glad enough to do so, I assure you, Mr. Olaff," said I; "and I don't want to go this way with the same or a similar cargo aboard again."

"Nor I nuther, sir!" exclaimed he, with animation, "so help me Jemminy! But let 's see if Bill's below."

With that he went to the mouth of the cavern, — a narrow opening, not more than twelve yards wide by eight high, — which from below, and from the neighboring rocks, looked insignificant enough, and not likely, therefore, to attract attention as the entrance to a place of nefarious traffic.

I followed Ben cautiously, feeling the sides of the rocks as I went along, until I came to the extreme verge of the precipice, which went plump down, with the exception of a slightly projected rock, to the sea, — a distance of one hundred feet. I looked below, and, short as the distance was, became sick and giddy, although I had caught a glimpse of Bill Gibbons and the boats, by the light of the rising moon and the stars. I shrunk back as soon as I could, and calling to Ben, asked him if he had brought any Hollands away with him.

"To be soore I hev," said Ben, pulling a quart bottle out of a pilot-coat which he had taken from the cave; "an' much it be at your sarvice, sir! Here, lad! tuck t' bottle an' drink, for thou maun be varry weary an' tired."

"So I truly am, Mr. Olaff," said I; "and I shall be heartily glad of a deep and potent draught. Thank you, good friend, and good luck to you!" quoth I, putting my mouth to the bottle, and drinking a whole Mediterranean sea out of its ample bowels. "I needed this much, Mr. Olaff," said I, returning the bottle; "and now I see that good drink was made to be used, and not abused."

"Jist it," rejoined Ben, opening his mouth and shoulders, and taking a drink deep enough — in Oriental phraseology — to float a seventy-four gun ship, "jist it, sir! Niver abuse the good things o' the good God! but use 'um like blazes, to good purpose, as you and me does, sir, jist now, Amen! cho-re-ous! as the Methodyke brethern say, of which lot I 'se one, an' not a varry bad chap, nuther, Mister Leeds Gentleman!"

I confess I thought he was n't a bad chap, although I could see by the last speech he made that the Hollands was, at last, laying hold of him. There was not much the matter with him, however; he was merely "screwed," and very far from being what the Yankees call "tight." So I said to him:

"Mr. Olaff, had n't you better hail Bill Gibbons, and let us lower Paul over these infernal rocks at once? For, to speak truth, I shall be glad when he 's safe in the boat below."

"Suer, sir, I 'll hail him. I whants to be i' Flambruf mysen; an' I sudn't hev been here now, if he had n't been away so lang that Bill an I, when we cumed fra Bridlinton, and fund ye had n't cum back, made up our minds to teck t' boat and look for yer. Yer see, sir, we thote that, mayhap, some hackcident had fallen yer, — an' that fetched uz t' cave."

"Very good of you, Mr. Olaff, and I thank you heartily for your kindness. Now be so obliging as to hail Bill, and let us put Paul over the rock."

With that Mr. Olaff once more approached the verge of the cave and spoke with a loud voice:

"Bill there! below! what cheer, shipmate? Is all ready?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the prompt answer.

"Then keep a good lookout, Bill! we 're goin' to drop the live cargo."

"All right," replied Bill.

"And now we 'll fix the ropes, Mister," said Ben. And in a few minutes he made all fast to a windlass which had escaped my notice, and presently Paul was launched over the side; Ben taking his place at the handle of the machine, whilst I leaned against one side

of the cavern's mouth, watching with nervous concern and agitation the slow descent of the hammock and its contents. All went on well for about twenty feet, when on a sudden, a loud, wild shriek broke through the silence of the night, and was echoed from crag to crag in loud reverberations, as if all the headland were alive:

> "And Jura answered from her misty shroud,
> Back to the joyous Alps which called to her aloud."

Not literally, but figuratively, — and also on a small scale; for Paul's lung-roar could not be compared, with anything like poetical justice, to the tremendous voice of the thunder speaking in those dread Alpine accents. Paul's lung-roar, however, was enough to scare me and my mates; for Ben called out in evident terror:

"What now, sir? what the devil's the matter? And where does that frightful cry cum fra?"

"It comes from the hammock, Mister Olaff," quoth I; "Paul's waking out of his drunk, and I fear there 'll be mortal mischief done before five more minutes are over."

"Nowt o' t' soort, sir!" said Ben, as he doubled the speed of the windlass; "if Paul's soberin' the sooner we gets him down the better; but there 's nowt to fear, — mark me if there be."

There was a good deal to fear, however; for Paul had woke to one of his lucid intervals, as good novelists have it, and I felt sure there would be a serio-comic, if not tragic demonstration before long.

Holding with both hands to the side of the cave, I bent my head over the rocks to watch the result of Paul's awakening. I saw in the dim light a struggle amongst the canvas drapery; a terrible struggle as of a man in his final agony, — and then burst forth another cry, but less shrill and piercing than the last, — a sort of muffled cry, although appalling enough to the ear of the listener; and finally — my eyes still fixed below, as if by all-powerful magnetic influence — I saw the hammock double, and in another instant Paul tumbled head foremost, down, down into the sea below!

"My God!" I exclaimed, "it 's all over with poor Paul, Mister Olaff! He has jumped into the sea, and there 's an end of him."

"You don't say so! Now cum, sir, don't say that!" said Ben, letting go the handle of the windlass, and coming forward to the mouth of the cave; "God's life, man, it 's true enough," he added, looking over the side. "Poor Paul! thou wast a good lad, though thou didst git into that unconsciousable opium drunk, — an' thy poor ode

muther 'ul dee when she hears o' thy drownin's. Poor Paul!" said Ben, rubbing the sleeve of his pilot-coat over his eyes; "poor ode chap! thy end's a wet 'un! But bad's the best o' maest men, — bad's the best, Paul!"

"Can you see Bill, Mister Olaff?" said I. "Call to him, and ask him if he heard Paul tumble into the sea."

"O, ay, sir! Bill, there! There away, Bill!"

But no answer came to the call; and looking down we could not see Bill anywhere.

"He's artet him," said Mister Olaff. "I'll pound it, he's arter him; an' Paul won't be lost yet awhile; for mark me, Bill's a rare swimmer, an' full o' pluck as a game-cock."

"I hope he'll save him, Mister Olaff," quoth I; "but in very truth I don't believe he will. It's all up, as I said, with poor Paul."

"Here cums Bill's boat, sir!" cried Ben; "I sees him there away, below. Hollo, Bill! Bill Gibbons, what's got Paul! Hast t'er picked him up? or has t' lad sunken t' bottom?"

"Sunk, captain!" cried Bill; "sunk, an' there's an end. Had n't you chaps better cum down?"

"Can you ride i' t' lubber's hammock, sir?" quoth Ben. "I'll let you down easy enough, if you 'll on'y be quiet; an' as for me, I can tie t' rope taut t' windlass and go below hand over feet wi'out help fra onybody."

"Yes, Mister Olaff," I replied, "I can do that same; so draw up the empty canvas, and I'll embark at once."

Ben did as I requested, and in a few minutes I stood in the boat with Bill Gibbons, — and neither of us spoke a word. In a few minutes more Ben Olaff joined us; for running down the single rope was nothing to him; and then we pulled to the "North Sea," taking the boat which poor Paul and myself had come out in that morning in tow. And thus we reached the shore.

CHAPTER XXV.

A DISQUISITION UPON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF OPIUM; AND A CRITICAL NOTICE OF THE "ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER."

THE history of the operations of opium upon the mind of man is a profoundly interesting study; and, indeed, the entire subject of artificial stimuli, their action and bearing upon all human conditions, is of immense importance, both theoretical and practical, to the philosophy and conduct of life. Whence arose this strange and startling, this old and universal custom, which comes to us through so long a line of ancestry, in such vast and continuous processions from all the regions of the earth? Peoples sundered by wide seas, and prodigious distances; by constitutional differences and bold contrasts of climate and national manners, have always — from the first memorials of history to the present hour — been alike its sanctioners and slaves, in one form or other of its manifestations. And the origin of the custom lies in the mighty cravings of humanity, — its hungry instincts after happiness. Not contented with his actual condition; with the high and exalted pleasures which spring from the healthy exercise of his mental and bodily functions; nor with the inspirations and overshadowings wherewith Nature, by her queenly acts of grace, surprises the soul into beholdings of its future beatitude and glory; man strives to get beyond all this; beyond himself and his environments, and to realize by magical and demon agency, whatsoever exists for him in the regions of possible experience. This is the hidden mystery of the charm and allurement of all stimuli; and of opium in particular, as the sole known medium which — without the usual accompaniments of vulgar intoxication — releases man most completely from the coils of mortality, and so vivifies the intellect and the imagination as to give him the power, the comprehension, and the being which would seem to appertain only to some divine and colossal intelligence.

For this awful drug does literally push back the dark curtains which drop round the terrestrial boundaries, the finite concaves of

the soul, — and swell their extremest frontiers beyond all conceivable limits and embracements, into the wilds and deserts of infinitude. Space and time have no longer any relation to thought, but are swallowed up and absorbed in an eternity of being, — in a consciousness which is all in all! Not a merely passive consciousness, however, — but full of activities, vital forces and combinative powers, — and stranger than all, of an oppressive feeling of duration, akin to the mystery, but not to the historical conception of time. The opium-eater lives in eternity! Time is but a gasp in his mighty breathings; and all its pageantries unroll themselves in geological and historic periods and epochs before him, like pictures which suddenly come and vanish.

And in this sudden visitation and disappearance he has lived millions of ages, and feels all the immensity of their revelations and burden. Not as satiety, however; but as sublime, sorrowful experience; and out of this experience in the chambers of his eternal and inhuman solitude he weaves, in starry looms amidst the muffled and funereal music of ponderous revolving worlds, — new, strange, and more wondrous cartoons of unearthly design and coloring in the gloomy fabric of his visions forever!

This fatal toil, however, this agony of dream creation and its results, are not the invariable conditions and sequences of opium eating, but rather the isolated and extraordinary necessity and manifestation of opium power operating upon a mind — as in the case of De Quincey and Coleridge, for example — of great original capability, — as well as susceptibility of impression from the grand and beautiful forms of nature. Culture, and long habits of contemplation and of communion with the master intellects of the world, are likewise requisite as a basement for the structures, terraces, battlements, canopies, and scenery of the highest opium trances.

And lacking this, the whole horizon of the enchanted world is changed in its entire portents and scenic presentiments; and may assume the most brutal features of sensuality and sin, and become the veriest slaughter-house and shambles of the moral nature, populous only with ghastly, libidinous, and unspeakable horrors. For the singularity of the experience, and its psychological interest, indeed, is precisely this: that it seizes and enlarges the original ideas, associations, and products of the mind in its natural state, — and apparently superadding nothing as material, either of purity or impurity; but simply, as I said, magnifying all into shadowy vastness, — arranging them forever in new combinations, and placing them in new

connections with themselves; the character of the whole taking its coloring, its moral and intellectual tone, from the actual nature and furniture of the mind of the experimenter.

If, therefore, men will evoke the enchantments of opium, let them take heed — unless they are prepared to encounter horrors, compared with which all that we have heard of infernal torments is ridiculously and childishly fabulous — that they are not tainted by any dark pollutions, lusts, cruelties, or crimes; for in the phenomenal of opium, as upon the black and lurid concaves of some dismal, unimaginable hell, — all these will flame back upon their souls and affright them with dire terrors which no man can conceive or number.

To the purest and most highly gifted minds, opium with all its illusions and splendors — even if, in their experience of its power, they know it only by these showings — is a fearful enchanter and dread taskmaster and exactor; commanding its subjects by the subtlest tyranny to an absolute obedience, and giving them no rest from the toils and galleys of its gorgeous slavery. But to the canine man, with his canine instincts and brute faculties, — which can build nothing higher in conception than an obscene temple for the monstrous worship of a brute sensuality, — opium has more frightful, because more degrading, retributions; although the retributive scale, in all its gradations from plus to minus, descending to the lowest, and ascending to the highest, is perfectly adjusted according to opium law; and the malicious tempter is as swift and dreadful as Nemesis in its executive administrations, as soon as its victim is completely and irremediably in its power.

For it is only then that the basilisk eyes and the crocodile heart of the Monstrous Drug unfold their malice and cruelty.

Its border territory is, to the highest minds at least, full of beauty and all sensuous enchantments; and these steal into the soul, like noiseless, musical shadows, bringing with them the sweetest, softest, and most blessed repose. But a few steps further, and the adytum is gained! The enchantments deepen; pillars of fiery adamant suddenly rise up behind, and around the unhappy trespasser, and cut off his retreat forever. There is no return. And here it is that the malice of the Drug displays itself in all its potency, — acting, as I said, upon the original faculties and experience of its victim, and multiplying these into infinite varieties of beauty or of terror, — or of both combined.

Whilst speaking of the operations of opium upon the human mind,

I shall very readily, I hope, be pardoned if I make a short digression and speak also of Thomas De Quincey, the "English Opium-Eater."

He gradually works his way, by the most merciless logical processes, to the very outermost rind of things, laying bare the arcane mechanism, and exposing the mysteries of their being and growth. His faculty of analysis, indeed, is one of the most prominent and remarkable characteristics of his intellect. He excels in all the diversities of mental dissections, and is in this respect superior to most, not only in skill, but in kind and degree of power. He is like a creator unravelling his own handiwork, so perfect and absolute is his resolution of the problems which he undertakes to solve. And superadded to this marvellous gift is the endowment of imagination, whereby he clothes the naked skeletons of thought and the barest natural objects with the garlands and singing robes of poetry. He has developed the resources of our noble English tongue by the power of his genius and the fine discrimination of his scholarship, to an extent of which it seemed incapable, from the very nature of the language, and the golden uses to which the great masters of our literature had previously married it.

With one or perhaps two exceptions, no contemporary has worked the etymological mine to the same depths that he has, or read with such instructive appreciation the exoteric meaning and value of words in their relation to the architecture of language. We nowhere discover, even in his most fugitive and extempore performances, any looseness of expression or disregard to the unity and epical result of his sentences. He is faultless in his constructions, and his writings are models of classic purity. This perfection of style, however, and the gorgeous imagery of illustration in which it moves, are at times wearisome and almost painful to the reader. One would fain break through the ranks of this stately monotony of pomp and beauty.

This is especially the feeling with which we, at least, read the "Suspiria de Profundis," and some passages of the "Opium Confessions." But the charm of the writer gradually prevails over all personal feelings, and he carries us away on the fiery wings of his imagination, until self-consciousness is lost, and absorbed in wonder and amazement at the sublimities of his daring revelation.

Nor do we, by these remarks, intend to charge De Quincey with anything like a general sameness in his writings, although, as we said, they are always provokingly perfect; and in the finest sweep and compass of their power, oppressive sometimes from excess of

grandeur, and overwhelmingly sorrowful. These traits, however, are physiognomic, and belong for the most part to that dark and tragical subject which is the burden of his soul, otherwise he is one of the wisest and most companionable of men.

For, strange as it may appear to those who know him only by his "Opium Confessions," — and the majority of readers are shut down in their knowledge of him within these limits, — he is essentially a humorist, and cannot restrain himself. Humor is in him, and must out. It pervades all his essays, intruding occasionally even into the sacred precincts of sorrow and tragic catastrophe, where clearly it can have no functional rights, and must, therefore, be a fatal and unpardonable mistake of judgment! but otherwise manifesting itself in legitimate and endless varieties of forms, — now gay and lively, now caustic and severe, — or it bursts out in multitudinous ringing laughters. Thus he often tosses his darkest and profoundest sentences into billows of sunshine, rejoicing in this huge play like Leviathan in his abysmal deeps. It is his element, and one of the main armories of his power. Sad and solemn as are the foundations of his nature, and terrible as is the Iliad of woes which he has built, out of the experience and through the agency of opium, upon them, he has a keen sympathy with whatsoever is genial and beautiful in human life, and loves to portray it. A man of wide and deep relations, he expands on all sides to the infinite, and recognizes those fine threads of destiny which unite all persons, and keep all interests together in the woof of Time, and marshal them for new and ever newer developments in the eternal cycles of progression. It is this knowledge which deepens his interest in the concerns of life as they are exhibited upon the platforms of history, and it is that relationship which quickens his intellectual perceptions, and enables him to detect at a glance the multiform masters of the sphere. He is a large and hospitable man, at whose hearthstone the most opposite and incongruous persons find welcome. Ricardo comes with his Novum Organum of political economy! Coleridge with his theosophies, metaphysics, and poetry! Kant, Richter, Lessing, and Hegel unfold their burdens of philosophy before him! The Cæsars their conquests! Cicero his orations and body of moral law! Wordsworth with his Brahmanical self-idolatry, worship of his own poetry, and abnegation of all other genius and of all contemporaries! And these, with innumerable companies of greater and lesser men, make up the guest-roll of this lordly symposiarch.

Nothing can more clearly demonstrate the wide range of De

Quincey's mind, the masculine character of its materials, and the Paphian texture of his genius, than his intellectual recognition of this diverse assembly. Between Ricardo and Wordsworth — the one representing the laws of practical life in their relation to the value of labor and commodity; the other, man's spiritual nature in its relation to the universe — rolls a wide gulf — over whose spaces legions of men might float their argosies. Yet in this large, cosmical mind of De Quincey, they are all absorbed, and plenty of room left for more.

He is the supreme magistrate of modern speech; he stands alone, and resembles no one. Tried by the rules which guide ordinary men in the art of composition, he is doubtless wanting, and must put in the plea of guilty, recommending himself to such mercy as ordinary men can show; or, as he would probably prefer, he must move the venue of trial to a higher court, and then and there plead the right of exception, by virtue of his individuality and genius; for the formula as well as the style of his composition are his own, and bear his mark. In the conduct of his argument he does not proceed in a direct mathematical line to his object, and conclude his demonstrations with the Orthodox Q. E. D., the Selah of all problems in geometry; but he frequently commences with a dissertation upon something altogether foreign to it, diverging even in this preliminary article to something else quite as alien to it as it is to the subject of which he professes to speak; and yet, by a singular feat of magic, he contrives so to merge this apparently extraneous matter into the statement of the proposition, and even into the body of the discourse, where it diverges again into similar alien channels, that we cease to regard it as an intrusion or an impertinence, and end by thoroughly accrediting and enjoying it. For if these fine digressions, which are but the superabundant luxuriance of his ripe and tropical mind, do sometimes interrupt the logical sequences, they never disturb the general harmony of his discourse or weaken the force of his conclusions. Like a mighty river rolling seaward, in magnificent sweeps and circuits of movement, through a landscape ever changing in features, from the repose and beauty of pastoral scenes to rocky terrors and regions of sublime altitudinous mountains, upon whose restless fronts lightnings flame, and thunders gather at the audible summons of the storm, — so he, clad in glory and terror, rolls along in his tortuous, labyrinthine course, onward to the final goal of his proceeding. He is full of thoughts, and there is no end to his learned illustrations, which, indeed, follow all his footsteps, like servitors and

torch-bearers from the ruins of every dead civilization. The mind, through an excess and surcharge of power, often hinders itself, producing a kind of atrophy and paralysis in its motions; but this is never the case with De Quincey; he is always master of his own empire, and rules it with an absolute sceptre.

He enslaves, by his will, all the imagery of nature, and forces it into the service of his imagination and the ministry of his designs. Art and science, literature and learning, are his conscripts, and lay their spoils and triumphs at his feet. His ideas suggest each other sometimes with so startling a rapidity that the effect is almost supernatural, as if a sudden light had broken into some forgotten sepulchre of his brain, and raised them to a simultaneous resurrection. Such a man, and much more, is Thomas De Quincey; and such are the effects which opium has produced upon him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MISSION TO POLLY DRADDA. — PAUL DEAD AND ALIVE AGAIN. — ROBERT HERRICK AND HIS POETRY. — SHOOTING-MATCH BETWEEN GEORDIE AND IKEY.

WHEN we reached the shore we all sat down on a rock at the northern mouth of Robin Lithe's cave, and held a consultation as to the manner in which poor Paul's melancholy fate was to be broken to Mother Dradda. I advised a plain statement of the fact, tempered with as much delicacy and feeling as possible. Not to be spoken abruptly, however, but to be broken to her gradually; and this was finally agreed to. The next question was, who was to undertake the office of spokesman to this terrible bereaved dam of the Beer House?

"Thee maun do it, Ben," said Bill Gibbons; "thee 's the greatest favorite o' all the chaps that visits the 'Jolly Pirate'; and thou knows thou can talk like a book."

"Me, Bill," cried Mr. Olaff, in great consternation; "I 'd as soon face the Devil as ode Polly when she hears this tidings."

"Then, perhaps, the Leeds genleman 'ul be so obligin'," said Gibbons, with amusing pertinacity, and a droll expression in his voice.

"I don't think," I replied, "that it would be very good for my health if I did, Master Gibbons; for Polly, you see, might break my pericranium with her poker, and lay his death at my door, as he and I went out together this morning. Had n't you better undertake the business yourself, Master Gibbons?"

"Lord bless you, sir! how you talk! I should n't know how to set about it. I 'se not larned, you see, as you and Ben is; and if I was to try it on, I should blab it all out at once, case I can't tack wi' words, you see! nor beat about t' pint; I 'd be sure to sail streight ahead wi' the wind being aft."

"Then, I suppose," said I, "that I must do it myself. It is n't a pleasant thing to do at any time, and especially with such a woman as Polly Dradda; but to end the parley, I 'll undertake it."

It was a calm and beautiful moonlight night; and the sea flashed

and glittered in its rays all along the silver track of the moon's march, as far as the eye could reach; whilst here and there, looming through the haze, the white sails of ships showed themselves, like ghostly banners going up to some dread, unknown battle, in some dread, unknown region of the watery waste. The calm, beautiful, treacherous sea! weltering there, as I said, in the moonlight, as unconcerned at the fate of poor Paul as if a midge had perished upon its bosom. Had it not swallowed up whole argosies, whole fleets of battle-ships — whose proud decks held the thunder of a hundred cannon — many a time before, with the same supreme indifference? What, then, was Paul to that treacherous and terrible, that implacable and merciless sea, when a hundred thousand ships and men were but as midges to it, insignificant as he?

I felt sad at the thought, and, although it was very unphilosophical, I don't think it was inhuman so to feel. And as we rose to depart, I said to Mr. Olaff:

"Don't you think the sea looks pretty calm and cool, considering that it owes us a life to-day?"

"It 's the way on 't, you sees, sir," he replied; "it can't help its natur, no more nor ony othur critter that God A'mighty 's made. It has n't got no bowels o' compassion, that 's a fact! Besides which, it 's use to it. Now, if you or me had swallowed Paul up, — that is to say, providin' we 'd got gullets wide enough, an' lower inards deep enough to do sich a cannible hact, — they 'd a taen uz up for murder, an' man-eatin' o' t' corpse; but it ain't naterel for uz to do so, God be thanked! — altho' yon briny monster yonder may eat up as many chaps as he can catch, — an' no parish beadle can tak hold o' his beard, and clap him in t' common jail for t' crime. It 's t' natur o' t' sea, sir, as I telld ye, and salt water ain't 'sponsible as a man be, — which is correct."

"And what do you think, Mr. Olaff, this cruel, irresponsible monster does with its hundreds of thousands of dead?"

"Does wi' um, sir? does wi' um? why feeds his fishes wi' um, to be sure; an' that I 'spects meks cod and hallibut so fat at times. For, mark me, sir, I 'se an' ode fisherman on this ere coast, an' I notices that whenever there 's a power of wracks, the next haul of fishes we gets is 'ticularly plump an' fleshy. Mayhap ye does n't believe it; but I say that 's a fact. Gather up the clews then, an' you 'll find that t' sea feeds his fishes wi' the dead he swallows."

"Very logical, Mr. Olaff, but very unpleasant to think of, especially at dinner-time. And what becomes of the souls of the dead men thus inhumanly devoured? Can you tell me that?"

"Well, I suppose they go to Jesus, if they 're good chaps, an' if not, to t' other yon."

"Then you don't think the fishes eat the souls o' the dead as well as their bodies?"

"No, by Jemminy! there 's soles enow i' t' sea wi'out them."

"But how do the souls escape from the bodies with ten thousand tons of brine upon them?"

"Eh! That 's more nor I can tell, so help me Tibby, kiss my thumb! to that fact. But so it is, Mr. Leeds gen'leman; put your trust i' that, now, for a clinker."

"Well, Mr. Olaff, I will put my trust in it, — 'so help me Tibby, kiss my thumb!' as you say, — although it 's a puzzling thing to find out, you must confess."

"Not to them as believes i' the Lord, Mister! Does you believe i' the Lord?"

"To be sure I do, Mr. Olaff; but a man may ask a civil question, although he does believe in the Lord, may n't he?"

"Sartenlee, sir! an', as you say, it be a puzzlin' thing, — tho' I believes what I teld you, as can't explanation it."

"Well, Mr. Olaff, death is a strange, mysterious thing, and no living man shall ever know the meaning of it, nor what it leads to."

"Yea he shall," quoth Ben; "death means death, an' it leads to glory."

"I wish it may lead to glory, Mr. Olaff, for Paul's sake."

"Paul war a good chap, sir," interrupted Bill Gibbons, "an' why not he be glorified, as the Methodykes say? He did n't like parsons, to be sewer, but he war none the warse for that; an' he did n't go t' church, an' he war none the warse for that; but he war alus ready, i' times gone by, to do a good turn to ony body; an' I liked Paul, an' d—n me if he sha'n't be glorified."

By this time we were close to the "Jolly Pirate," and none of us were free from trepidations, for in truth it was a solemn as well as a painful errand we had come on, and we knew not what would come of it, so far as Polly Dradda was concerned.

"Now for the thunder," said Bill Gibbons, after a short pause. "I does n't want to jest over it, an' by the painter! Mr. Leeds gen'leman, we sall find it no joke when we gits inside them ere beer walls."

"Never mind, Bill," said I, "we can't help it; and I 'm truly sorry for the old woman, and am willing to put up with a good deal from her."

"It 's hard, you see, sir," quoth Mr. Olaff, "it 's hard for t' ode

'oman, who 'd jist got back her son fra Ingies, arter so many years bein' away, to lose him so soon i' a opium drunk."

"So it is, Mr. Olaff; but the sooner we get our errand done the better. Let us go at once, therefore, to the house."

None of us spoke again until we got up to the door, when Gibbons said: "Let 's all go in together, Ben; I 'se not afeared o' ony man o' my inches an' weight, an' would n't mond chuckin' a few pounds in at a push, — but a woman 's the Devil, an' Polly 's his dam, an' I knows she 'll poker us, or fling her pewters an' crockeries at us; so let 's go in together. It 'll mek us stronger i' the narves, an' more abler to bear the towrow."

So we entered, when, to our utter amazement, — amazement which almost petrified us, so that we could neither speak at first, nor believe our eyes, — there sat Paul opposite to his mother, in the chimney-nook, dripping with wet, a red cloth cap on his head, and smoking a Turkish pipe, as unconcernedly as if nothing had happened to him.

When we had recovered our senses, we all exclaimed, involuntarily and at once, "Why, Paul! is that you?"

And Paul answered and said: "Yes, I believe it is. I don't think I 'm anybody else, although I had a brother once who was very much like me, but I don't think I 'm him. What do you say, mother, am I my brother, or am I anybody else, or am I myself?"

"Soap bubbles an' blowed bladders!" cried the old woman, turning up her nose indignantly, "don't go for to talk i' that fashion, Paul! Who else sud'st thou be but thysen, thy mother's son, the son of thy mother wat keeps the *Jolly Pirate*, an' sells the best beer i' the parish? But wat 's the matter wi' these chaps anent us, that they stares at thee so, lad? Do they want ote o' thee? Is ote wrang? Come, ye chaps, spake out, what 's up wi' ye or him? Spake out, I say, will ye, or by the Devil's tail I 'll send t' poker at your yeads!"

"Be quiet, mother, and don't be uncivil to people who come to yer house. Nobody 's any right to be uncivil. It shows bad breeding, and often a bad heart, although this last is not your case, I know, good mother. But I will have you treat people civilly whilst I stay with you. And now, friends, be seated, and if you have anything to say, let us hear it at once."

"Ay, let 's hear it, good chaps," added the old woman; "but mayhap ye 'd like to wet your whistles afore ye begins to spake; if so, gie the word, an' I 'll go draw the beer."

My mates ordered a quart apiece, and as soon as the beer was

brought in by our accommodating hostess, I said: "Truly, Mr. Dradda, I am exceedingly glad to see you, — for we were all sadly afraid we should see you no more in this world."

"How so?" said Paul.

"After the accident which befell you so lately."

"What accident?" he asked, with an expression of astonishment which could not be feigned.

"Do you not know? Is it possible you do not remember it?"

"I remember no accident that befell me. I remember nothing, except — as I suppose — that I went down to the beach opposite the "Cow and Calf" to bathe, and that I forgot to take off my clothes, and so came home full of salt water, and here I 'm sitting to dry myself."

"Doest remember t' cave, Paul, where thou took t' Leeds gen'leman, the morn? Thou is n't forgot that, surelee!"

"Cave?" cried Paul, putting his hand to his forehead, as if bewildered by some vague memories. "Cave? I recollect going out with the gentleman this morning, to visit the south rocks," — and then starting up with sudden and violent motion, he added, in an agony of passion: "my God, then it was no dream; I thought it was all a dream. O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from these dreadful chains!" Then as suddenly recovering himself, he asked me: "Are you sure, sir, we entered the cave? Are you sure it was no dream?"

"Quite sure, Mr. Dradda; but never mind that, now. I heartily thank God it 's all over, and that you are safe."

"But prove to me that we entered the cave, by telling me how we entered it."

"By diving."

"Then it 's all true; and this accursed drug has cheated me into believing that it was a dream."

"What 's it all about, Paul, that ye tek on so?" asked the old woman. "Good lad, tell thy ode mother wat ails thee, an' wats been wrang to-day. Thouse my owny son, Paul, an' thou munna be down i' the mouth now that thouse cumed home agen. Thou 'll breck my heart, Paul, ef thou goes on that way. Dear Paul! my son, my son, tell thy ode mother all about it."

But Paul had now grown quite calm, and put his mother off with some kind and gentle words, which satisfied her.

"Well, Mr. Dradda," said I, going up to him, and shaking him by the hand, "the past cannot be recalled; but the present and the

future are before us. You are a sensible man, and will understand me. I must now bid you good night; and so good night all." He said nothing, but pressed my hand, and then bowed down his head on his breast.

"Wante ye drink, Mister, afore ye go?" cried Gibbons, holding out his quart-pot.

"No, Bill, I think I shall not drink. You know my practice. Good night."

"But ye drinked the Hollands, Mister, and what for not the beer?"

"That was from necessity, — because I required it. If I drank now, it would be from choice; for I do not require it. It won't do, Bill. Once more, good night!" I walked rapidly towards the *Golden Lion*, after this new and strange adventure, wondering how it was possible that Paul should have escaped death after his terrible fall, and how he succeeded in getting ashore; and, stranger and more wonderful still, how the entire memory of what had passed during the day should have vanished from his mind. I attributed it all, however, to the influence of the opium which he had swallowed in the morning. The shock of the fall would doubtless stun him for a time, but as soon as he recovered, the instinct of self-preservation would urge him to swim to the shore, which was not far-distant; and the drug which had given him the power of a dozen men, now roused to its utmost activity, rendered his battle with the waves an easy victory. I can account for his escape in no other way.

When I arrived at "mine inn," I paid my reckoning, and took the main road to the encampment. It was nearly midnight as I crossed the green, and no one was astir; the camp-fires were out, and the barking of the dogs alone broke the silence. So I went to my tent, where I knew I should meet one friend awake, and glad to see me.

"Satan," I said, "good devil! good dog! how are you, old fellow?" as stooping down, according to my wont, I patted and fondled the dumb, noble beast. He answered in the best way he could by putting his paws affectionately on my shoulders, licking my hands and face, and literally trembling with joy.

I thought I would read an hour that night to soothe me after the events of the day; so I lighted my tallow candle, as it stood there by my straw bed, mounted, as I have once before stated, in the neck of a glass bottle attached to a stake driven into the ground; and taking Robert Herrick's poems from my trunk, I soon lost all my painful memories, and all sense of weariness, in the beauty and de-

licious melody, the charming fancies, the mirth and jollity, the sweet voluptuousness, of the poet.

I love Herrick, as every one does, or ought to do; and if they do not, it is only because they are unacquainted with his matchless lyrics. He was the contemporary of George Herbert, and the friend of Ben Jonson, and of Cotton, — the translator, after Florio, of "Montaigne's Essays." He was born at the close of the Shakespearian age, and lived through the entire era of the Commonwealth. What a surfeit of beauty there is in this quaint and delicious poet, and how finished and graceful are the touches of his pen! His verses seem to flow from him without effort, and his pictures are set in mosaics of flowers, or garlanded with myrtles; or they lie stretched out in sylvan loveliness beneath a sky of azure, amidst streams, and birds, and flocks, and groups of amorous and piping shepherds. He has the most charming and delightful fancies, which he dresses in the gayest coloring of romance, and makes them dance to the music of his lyre with the feet of fairies, or with the mirth and jollity of Bacchanalian rioters.

His light and laughing muse puts the mask of joy and pleasure upon all the forms of nature, and of human life. Whoever will be sad, Robert Herrick is not that man. He loves the sun and the free air; the beautiful earth, and the boundless heavens which spread over it in their rich and starry bespanglement. He very rarely touches the gloom and darkness, the sorrows and mystery of death, or if he does, it is with a gentle and beautiful hand, like that of a fair virgin who strews her sister's bier with flowers. There is more of sentiment and pensiveness than of sorrow in his heart; although he occasionally strikes a chord which vibrates through the soul, and leaves it as desolate and sad almost as death. Witness his poem "To Daffodils," commencing thus:

> "Fair daffodils, we weep to see
> You fade away so soon."

There are few of his poems, however, which sing to this tune, certainly not more than seven or eight of them. His brows are not crowned with cypress, but with myrtle. He carries sunbeams in his hands, and shakes them mirthfully around him, making all life a holiday. He will not be cheated of his dues; or of his right to live and be merry in the fairy palaces and ambrosial bowers of nature; but takes all that is his, and sings with a bird-like heart, in spite of the sour Puritanism by which he is surrounded. Indeed, the con-

trast presented between Herrick's antique and almost pagan muse — between his way of life and range of thought — and the religious enthusiasm of his time is very striking and suggestive. He was a man moulded after classic forms, with a strong individuality, and a genius, quaint and original. We can see throughout his poems how he hates fanaticism and cant, and how deeply he loves a healthy and manly life. Baptists and Anabaptists, Fifth-monarchy men, Quakers and Jumpers, Howlers and Thumpers, may rant and go mad as they please; but here is a man who is content with his muse, his books and friends, and cannot be caught up by the stream of fire, down which all the elements of society are floating upon combustible rafters. They may all burn into nothingness for him. He will have his joke; write epigrams, for the most part *not* good; write songs, than which there are few or none better; make harmless love to "Julia," and a hundred other sweet damsels; and enjoy a quiet housekeeping at Dean Priors, with his "Dame Prue," his "cat," his "dog," his "hen," and everything that is his.

A more contented or grateful man lived not in England whilst he was Vicar of Dean Priors. For gay and sportive as he shows himself in his verses, he was nevertheless a priest, — having been presented to his living by Charles I. His house was beautifully situated near the Dart, in Devonshire, about four miles from Ashburton and Totness, and he resided there for nineteen years, duly performing his duties as a clergyman, and "much esteemed also as a sober and learned man," according to the testimony of Walker. Wood (*Athenæ Oxon.*, p. 122) adds to this, that "he was much beloved by the gentry in those parts for his florid and witty discourse."

Taking Herrick's moral pieces as the base of his poetical character, and allowing his amatory effusions a sphere to themselves, as constituting a sort of mythological skywork to cap and crown the poet, there is yet another sphere occupied by his muse, which, to complete the conceit of this classification of his faculties, we will place below the base on which he stands, and call it the underground of romance and necromancy. In other words, it is the sphere of the Fancy, which he peoples with fairy-land creations, going down into the caves of the earth to sit with genii over their enchantments; with witches over their caldrons of baleful brewis; or, conjuring up Palaces of Oberon, wherein Oberon and Mab indulge in stolen embraces; and all this done, too, with a freshness and beauty which may well match with the similar productions of Shakespeare.

Herrick has also a poetic garland for the tomb; verses of love and beauty, not unmixed with sorrow, but still sweet as the odor of dying flowers. He is a Greek in his sympathies with human suffering and calamity. He cannot rant or rave, but he brings violets and cowslips, and drops them over the bosom of the dear dead, singing soft and gentle melodies, like the voices of the wind amongst the trees at even. Death is no skeleton to his mind, but a beautiful angel who leads the funeral train with inverted torch, and tears in his divine eyes, which look upward.

I do not envy the cold-blooded natures which cannot be warmed and kindled by the amorous and bacchantic songs of Herrick, — neither could I ever quite pardon them. To me he is dear, because he was more of a man than a saint; because he loved good fellowship, and the fair faces of beautiful women, and the genial influences of wine and music; and still more, because he was endowed with the true faculty of song, and was the violet of poesy.

The "Amatory Odes" will always be read by the matured with scholarly enjoyment; and by the young with pleasure, although not with rapture. For love is a passion which enters so largely into the life and concerns of men, that every new celebration of it is a new hymn to its glory, a new attestation of its power and influence. Old and young must needs thank the poet who can set their feelings and aspirations to the melodious numbers of song, — who can interpret their inmost thoughts, and give utterance to the divine fulness of their hearts. Herrick, however, is not the expositor of passion, and he possesses none of the Byronic elements. Byron, indeed, is the master and Prime Minister of passion. He is made up of its fiery and tremendous impulses; and whenever he touches his harp, it is with the divine madness of a demigod; and he mingles all the soft and tender tones which the soul can utter with the yearnings of an infinite love and the wailings and blasphemies of an infinite despair. Herrick very providentially falls short of this, and makes up the deficiency in sweetness, tenderness, and classical purity of diction. His celebrations of love are mostly intellectual and imaginative; or they belong to the æsthetics of poetry. We rarely, or never, find his soul in his lines; hence they do not burn, and set the heart of the reader afire, but they please and delight him. His women are flesh and blood we can see; but he adorns them with such draperies of stars and flowers, that Isis, after her transformation, is not more beautiful than they are under the influence of his genius and fancy.

What a fine fancy there is in his lines called "Love's Perfumes."

The comparing of Anthea's breast when he kisses it to the warm nest of the Phœnix, with its immortal odors; and the steeping of her chaste and glorious beauties in the aromas of musks and ambers; and then the crowning fancy, where he says,

> "Juno cannot sweeter be
> When she lies with Jove than she,"

strikes me as being the very fairyism of poetry.

And this is one of the remarkable characteristics of Herrick, that his method and comparisons are unlike those of any other poet. He is at home in every form of lyric poetry, and yet his style and manner are his own. A sweet and happy thought comes singing into his mind, and lo! to give it adequate utterance, troops of beautiful, but uncommon images come from the most remote corners of nature, and take shape in fit and melodious words.

He is the most amorous man I know; amorous, but not gross; for he refines everything he touches. The zone of Venus, for example, is not so radiant as his love Julia's petticoat, and floats not in such voluptuous graces. He calls it "An azure robe, airy as gold leaves"; and thinks no imagery drawn either from earth or heaven too grand to decorate it. For it encircles the glowing form, the matchless sculpture of his beloved. It hides the dear bosom so soft and white, beneath which, as in a shrine of lilies, the warm heart beats that is all his own. And therefore it is that he paints it so finely.

Is it not a pity, now, that he never got married? That none of his "Julias," "Antheas," "Dianemes," "Perillas," "Silvias," could clap him into the matrimonial stocks, and so curb his warm fancies with a little of reality? Certainly he was a man fitted to make a woman happy; for he was all goodness, gentleness, and love; with a vein of quiet and genial humor running like rare old wine through his nature.

Enough, however, has now been said respecting his amorous writings. Some of his pieces under the head of "Fairy-Land" remind me of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," although they are distinct in themselves, and genuine creations. And what is especially welcome in these effusions, is the many allusions to old customs, traditions, and peculiarities which they contain. In this species of composition, too, he is an unquestionable master. True it is, that the moral, pastoral, and amorous poems appeal more directly to the heart and mind of the reader, and hence their fame and continuance in literature; but these fairy-land poems are also of great poetic

value, although I have no space to do anything like justice to them. His drinking-songs are also admirable in their way, — especially that addressed to Ben Jonson.

Herrick died in the year 1674. He wrote this epitaph on himself: —

> "Tread, sirs, as lightly as ye can
> Upon the grave of this old man.
> Twice forty, bating but one year,
> And thrice three weeks he lived here,
> Whom gentle fate translated hence
> To a more happy residence."

Of his personal appearance very little is known. Marshall engraved a portrait of him which was prefixed to the original edition of the "Hesperides," a copy of which will be found also in Nichols's "Leicestershire." But we may well doubt if it be a correct likeness. His features are represented as strong, yet coarse. The eyes are full of suppressed fire, and have a half-sad, half-gay expression. His voice was weak, and he relates in one of his poems that he had lost a finger. Many of his pieces are autobiographical; and little else is known of him, so far as his daily life is concerned. But we have the flower and aroma of his nature in his poems, and a rare and beautiful nature it is.

I fell into a sweet slumber after Herrick had lulled me with his music, and slept peacefully until sunrise, when I arose, and taking my gun under my arm strolled down the Danes' Dike to the seashore. There was a heavy dew on the grass as I journeyed along, which fairly tested the resisting power of my buckskin gaiters; and when I emerged upon the Dike I scarcely knew the old German Ocean again, on account of the dense fog which enveloped it. As the sun attained greater power, however, the mists gradually rolled away in huge mountainous masses northward towards Norway and the pole, and revealed once more the blue and sunny waters. I have often thought that dense fogs were more frequent on this sea than on any other. The ancient, inconceivably remote Celts, who, according to the Druidical "*Triads*," first colonized Britain under their great chieftain, "Hu, the Mighty," had to cross this sea from Denmark, and they called it the "hazy sea." And this physiognomical trait sticks to it still. It was clear enough now, however, and the waves laughed and leaped in the sunshine as if they were alive; —

> "Like creatures in whose sunny veins the blood is running bright."

I walked along the rocks, some of which were covered with slippery

brown seaweed, and richly colored *Algæ*, — whilst others were studded all over with the blue valves of the periwinkle, — until I came to a small bay, where the waters were as calm as one of my own fish-ponds amongst the trees, just below the lawn and flower-garden, opposite my front windows "in the old house at home." It was so beautiful that I stopped to gaze at it; when on a sudden a large waterfowl swam out into the centre from the adjacent rocks, dashing the spray from its glossy wings, and shaking its proud crest in the sunlight as if it had just awoke from a long snooze, and was now ready for its breakfast. Presently down went its head and neck, and then by a dexterous movement of its webbed feet the whole body descended, and in a few moments it rose again eight or ten yards farther off. I wanted something tasty for breakfast, and here was a fine chance to obtain it. The bird was within shot, and I knew if my eye once looked along the barrel of my gun, it would have a poor chance to take unto itself the wings of the morning — or even its own wings — and fly away and be at rest. And yet I hesitated; for although I am a sportsman bred and born, and have been accustomed from my boyhood to all sorts of exercises, both in flood and field, yet I am unfortunately possessed of large poetic sympathies, which, when they are unusually active, are sure to spoil my hunting. Was it not Byron who once shot a deer, or an eagle, and looking into the bright, dying eyes of his prey, they so sorrowfully reproached him that he declared he would never shoot again? I think it was. It is in the breed of all the vermin who belong to Apollo and the Muses.

And yet it is a foolish, over-refinement of feeling which a good sportsman ought to be ashamed of. Benjamin Franklin lived on beans and raw radishes, having the Brahminical conviction that to take life or to eat animal food was a wrong done to the creation. But strolling one day by the side of a Massachusetts pond he beheld a monstrous pickerel devouring an inoffensive fish, when he exclaimed, "Oh! oh! my fine fellows; if you eat one another, I don't see why I should n't eat you." And so ended his vegetarian and cosmical-humanitarian dream. Had not this wild-fowl also eaten sundry fish this morning? What compunctions of conscience had he about killing them? His crop was empty, and Nature herself, who is wiser I think than the humanitarian, had provided him with his prey. Well, my crop was empty, and there was my prey. This reasoning threatened to make short work of the poor bird. His chance of life was getting less and less the more I cogitated; and at last I resolved, that, as he had eaten the fish, so I would eat him.

Now I don't like to shoot a bird sitting. It is n't sportsman-like, but looks sneaking and foxy. So I gave a great shout, and the affrighted creature perked up its head, looking all around it with its bright eyes to see which side the danger lay; and as its wings flapped on the water preparatory to flight, and I was standing, gun in hand, ready to fire the moment it had fairly risen, I heard the sharp ring of a rifle from the top of the cliffs above me, and at the same moment the bird hugged the water, quivered and died.

I knew who fired that shot, — I was certain of it, — although from where I stood I could not see the marksman; and I confess I was a little savage over it. There was no help for it, however; so I stepped a dozen paces seaward, and looking up, I saw Ikey quietly reloading his rifle, standing on the very edge of the cliffs. I motioned to him to come down to the shore; for it was no use shouting, the rocks were so high. He pointed exultingly to the dead sea-bird in the little "Velvet Bay," and then shouldering his weapon he sought a rude staircase which had been cut out of the rocks, and in a few minutes he was by my side.

"Well, scapegrace," said I, "what made you shoot at my quarry just now? I've half a mind to give you a dose of salt and water this morning for your impudence. You must have seen that I was ready to cover the bird."

"Yes, Master Geordie, I seed you; but I thote you was a dreamin', you stood so long over the purty diver. An' when he was a goin' for to rise, the temptins was too much for me. Said I to myself, 'Master Geordie may miss him, — and it 'ud be a pity to lose sich a dainty chap, — so here goes!' an' wi' that I sent the bullet arter him to tell him as how he war wanted."

"It was a good shot, Mister Slipgibbet, and that 's the thing which saves your bacon; but now then off with your rags, and swim out yonder after the bird. I'll then talk to you further, and put your best shooting to the test; you, that despise Master Geordie's skill and eyesight, and think that he might have missed the bird."

Ikey laid down his rifle and proceeded to rid himself of his "looped and windowed" attire, chuckling all the while over the thought of the shooting-match which I had just proposed to him. I have no doubt he thought he could beat me easily; for he had never seen me practise with the rifle, and had only once accompanied me on a shooting excursion to Speighton rocks, where I used nothing but an ordinary fowling-piece.

I could not help admiring the fine, plastic form of the young tawny

savage, as he ran in the sunlight over the weedy and slippery rocks. He would have made a good study either for sculptor or painter, — so well-developed, so perfectly proportioned and balanced he was. No shrunk limbs and shrivelled muscles, no staring ribs, — such as your town chaps, with their ruinous ways of life, have brought themselves to, — but a richly toned body, full of health, vigor, power, which his black, disorderly head-locks set off to fine advantage.

He soon returned with the bird, which was shot clean through the body, and having dressed himself, looked up into my face and asked:

"Would Master Geordie like to try a shot for good luck and love wi' his brother Ikey?"

"Yes, Ikey, I should; and I'd advise you to look well to your chargings. You're a conceited Jackanapes, Ikey, and think that out of your own hide there is n't your fellow in creation. Now what 'll you bet, Ikey, that I don't beat you?"

"Ikey knows you'll beat him, brother, you that shot half a boat-load full of birds at Speighton wi' two double-barrel guns, and fired away fourteen pound of shot!"

"Cease your banter, Master Ikey, if you don't want my gun-barrel over your head, and let me see if you can hit a mark at point blank distance, as well as you can drill holes at a flying shot through halfpennies."

"Better try the flyin' shot, Master Geordie; Ikey's good at the flyin' shot."

"Yes, — but I ain't; and I want to take the conceit out of you, brother Ikey, if I can. Do you see that weed half-way up the cliff, shooting two feet, more or less, out of the soil in yonder crevice, Ikey?"

"Yes, brother, I sees it."

"Then he who breaks the stem of the weed first, wins. Is it a bargain?"

"It's a fine shot, brother; but it's a bargain."

"Well, you shall have the first shot, Ikey!"

"No, brother, you shall shoot first."

"We will toss for it, then."

"Good."

The coin was thrown up, and I won; so Ikey fired first; missed the stem, but cut off one of the drooping leaves of the plant.

It was now my turn, and taking a deliberate, cool aim, I pulled the trigger, and the ball grazed the stem, but did not break it.

"Gor A'mighty! Master Geordie," cried the tawny wild-boy, "that wur a near go! Ikey must mind his eye, or he 'll lose the game."

"I 'll do my best to make you lose it, Ikey, you may depend upon 't. Take your turn."

Again he tried, and again he missed, although he was almost within a hairsbreadth of the mark.

"That 'll do, Ikey," said I; "I sha'n't miss this time, and when I 've taken the shine out of you, I 'll crow over you at the camp-fire tonight, you may be cock sure. I will say to the brothers and sisters, 'I thought Master Ikey might miss the stem of the pretty darnel, and so I fired a ball and broke it for him.' Won't that be the right thing, Ikey, boaster?"

"Don't you be a boaster, Master Geordie," said he in dumpy sulks, "afore you 've done the deed. It 'll be time enough to holler when you gits out o' t' wood, — which you ain't yet."

"I think I am now, Ikey," said I, "firing as he spoke, and breaking the stem, so that the top of the plant dropped down over the side."

"Yes, Master Geordie, you is now, and that 's a fact. Why does n't you holler?"

"Time enough yet, Ikey, as you said just now. Are you satisfied?"

"I 'se satisfied that you 've done that ere shot fust, afore me, Master Geordie."

"Well, but you never hit it at all, Ikey. Confess now that you 're beaten."

"You beats me at the stalk, Master Geordie; but what 's that? Two ha'porth o' God help it wi' the cork out! Try the flyin' shot, Master Geordie! You won't beat me at the flyin' shot."

"I 'm not going to try to beat you, Ikey. I 've won honors enough for one good day. So let us go home to the tents, where I hope to see little Ina, of the tambourine, at the breakfast circle. By the way, Ikey, how do you get on with your purty cousin?"

"None so well, Master Geordie; tho' I 'se dropped the beer drinkins, as I teld you I 'ud. I 'se not well favored, you see, Master Geordie; an' I think nows and thens, as I lays i' the straw at nights, that Gor A'mighty must ha' been tired when he made me; or else that it wur Saturday night when he made me, an' he had n't time to finish me afore Sunday cumed, — an' that meks me so ill-favored, as will not let cousin Ina tek on wi' me. She 's a beauty, Master Geordie, is cousin Ina!"

"Yes, Ikey. A finer gal don't walk the gypsy streets. But what 's she say to you when you are alone together?"

"She calls me a fool, an' says I 'm as ugly as your bull-dog, Master Geordie."

"That is n't civil of Ina; because she means to vex you by it. Otherwise, Ikey, the-bull dog is as handsome, after his fashion, as any she in these parts. Tell her I say so."

"I will, Master Geordie, and you 'll catch it. Mind me if you don't."

"Ikey!"

"Yes, brother."

"I 'm thinking of a plan for your benefit, just now."

"Mine, brother? That 's just like you, Master Geordie."

"But it will all depend upon you whether it shall work well or not. Do you think you are a strong chap, Ikey?"

"Ask Big Toon, if it pleases you, brother."

"O, ay! I know all about the bone and muscle strength, — but I don't mean that."

"What then, brother? Who iver heerd o' any other sort of strenth, but what a man hes i' his hands and arms, his body and straddlers?"

"There 's a higher strength than that, Ikey; and I 'm going to see if you 've got any of it."

"You need n't trouble yourself, Master Geordie; I knows I has n't."

"Let us see. You love Ina, and perhaps she loves you, and perhaps she don't. Now to try whether she loves you or not, can you seem as if you did n't care about her? Can you sit at meat with her, and take no notice of her? Can you go to fairs with her, and pay more attention to your other little cousin Zetti, than to her? In short, can you for one week laugh and talk in her presence as if you did n't care a straw about her?"

"No, Master Geordie, I can't. I loves the very airth she walks on, an' the air she breathes; an' I would n't do anythin' that should be the offendin's of her."

"Not if by this means you were sure she would come to, and drop her proud ways, and seek you out instead of your seeking her out, and end by saying to you, 'Ikey, dearie! dearie Ikey! I 'se a wilful gal, an' hev done you wrong, an' I 'se sorry for it; an' I do love you, Ikey; an' I 'll be your wife, Ikey, dearie'; would that induce you to act a droll for once, brother Ikey?"

"If I was sure it would all be as you say, brother, I thinks it 'ud. But you does n't know Ina, Master Geordie. She 's got ten devils in her when she 's riz; an' if I was to bespise her, she 'd sure an' cut my company iver arter."

"I think I know Ina better than you do, my most innocent, young sucking-duck! and if you 'll do as I propose, I 'll wager you a new rifle against one of your drilled ha'pennies, that she comes to her moorings before the week 's out."

"If I could on'y think so, brother!"

"I 'm sure of it. And the strength I want you to put forth is that of the will. You must resolve to do strictly what I tell you to do, and you must do it. This resolution and the keeping of it are what I meant when I told you there was a higher strength than that of bones and muscles. Now decide, Ikey; will you follow my advice?"

"Yes, Master Geordie, I will."

"Then begin this morning; I see the smoke of the camp-fire over the tree-tops yonder, and we must now hurry, or the water-duck won't get cooked for breakfast."

CHAPTER XXVII.

COMING TROUBLE BETWEEN IKEY AND INA.

"GOOD morning, Granny," said I, as we approached the camp-fire; "those big baby boys and girls of yours find you plenty of work to do in the cooking line; and I wonder you ain't tired of it. Cook, cook, cook! from weary morn till chime! It's a very savory business, nevertheless, and I dare say you don't mind it, Granny."

"Not I as does, Master Geordie; hungry bellies must be fed, an' it does me good to see the childer eat what their old grandam teks a pleasure in mekin' nice an' tasty for 'um."

"What have you got in the pot this morning, Granny? Anything very good?"

"A tatur stew, Master Geordie; did yer iver eat a tatur stew?"

"What is it, Granny? What's it like?"

"I meks it o' taturs an' onions an' cheese an' big collups o' mutton; an' mighty good eatin' it be, I can tell yer, now."

"No doubt of it, Granny. But see here! Here's a fat duck, which if you've time to dress and roast will improve the breakfast commons considerable, Granny, I think. What do you say?"

"Say, Master Geordie? Why, that I'll hev him cooked in no time. Here, Ina, you lazy do-no-good! pick this swimmer, an' git it ready for the roast. Master Geordie wants it for his breakfast."

"Well, if he does, Granny," said Ina, who was sitting not far off at the door of her tent, combing her beautiful hair, "that's no reason why you should call me 'do-no-good,' and sich like ill-names. I'se ready to do the duck for Master Geordie, but it might have been 'Ina, dearie,' i' your mouth, Granny Mabel!"

"Hold your peace, child! an' do as you're bidden to. As if an ode 'oman like me can't call her own kin out o' their names wi'out bein' pulled over the camp-fire for 't! I meant no harm, my purty Ina! An' yer ought to know by this time whether I loves yer or whether I does n't."

"Well, Granny, I likes you to be civil to me; an' now you bes, I'se ready to do the fowl."

With that she began to pluck the feathers with a will, whilst Ikey and I stood looking on. Ikey, however, did not speak to her, nor take any notice of her."

"Where did you shoot this fine feller, Master Geordie?" she asked, after a short silence.

"I did not shoot it, Ina, dearie; your cousin Ikey shot it from the cliff-top, as it was swimming in 'Velvet Bay.'"

"Shot it with his rifle, Master Geordie?"

"Yes, Ina."

"Does you mean that for a joke, or for a down truth, now?" she asked, with an incredulous expression upon her face.

"A down truth, Ina."

"Well, Master Geordie, I believes yer. But if anybody else had teld me so I should hev put my forefinger to the right side o' my nose, thus, — an' hev cried 'Hookey!'"

"Ikey 's here, Ina, and can speak for himself."

"Where?" exclaimed the wilful girl, looking round and affecting not to have seen him all this while.

"Where?" I replied, "why here, close to my elbow. Has he grown so thin for love of you that you can't see him?"

"I sees him now you tells me where he is, — but I did n't know he was here afore; 'case I niver bothered myself to look for him."

"But now you do see him, Ina, can't you speak a kind word to him. Can't you wish him 'good morning.'"

"I could do sich a thin' as that, I dar' say, at a extra stretch, Master Geordie; but you sees I 'm ony half awaken, an' I does n't like the trouble. Besides, why can't he wish me 'good morning'? He ought to do it to me, and not want me to do it to him. I is n't used to it."

"Do you hear, Ikey, what she says," quoth I; "she wants you to do it to her."

"She 'll hev to want on, then, I suspicions," said Ikey, as if like Big Toon, on another occasion, he had got a bowlder in his throat.

Ina turned sharply round at this curt speech, and fixed her fine eyes on Ikey's face in wonder and amazement, as if she could n't believe her ears. He bore the gaze, however, bravely; and did n't wince a bit. I saw she was chagrined and disappointed, and evidently did not know what to make of it. She made no reply, however."

"Ikey 's on his stilts this morning, Ina," said I.

"Is he, Master Geordie?" she replied. "I did n't know he ever

walked on stilts. It 's what no Toon iver did afore; an' I 'd advise him to leave the tents, an' go an' tek up wi' the mountebankers, an' shew hisself at fairs an' feasts. Sich an 'andsome chap 'ud be sure to pick up plenty o' coppers."

"What do you say to that, Ikey?" said I. "There 's a fine chance for you."

"Ikey 's got nothin' to say to it," he replied. "It ain't worth a speech."

Again Ina raised her head, — not this time to look in Ikey's face, however; for she suddenly resumed her position and her occupation, coloring all up like a full-blown rose.

"Well, Ikey," I said, "if you don't think your cousin 's worth answering, I dare say she does n't think it worth while to talk at you any more. So come over to my tent; I 've got something to show you. When will the fat duck be ready, sister Ina?"

"When it 's cooked," she replied, as smartly as you please, now.

"And how long will it take to cook it, dearie?"

"I does n't know. I 'se no pot-baster. Ask Granny."

"Granny, dear," said I, turning to the old dame, "Ina 's been drinking vinegar this morning, and it 's turned her all sour; so that out of her sweet lips I can't get a sweet answer. I want you to tell me how long it will take to roast the fat duck?"

"Jist one turn o' the hour-glass, Master Geordie, — an' niver you mind Ina; she war alus a highty-tity, wilful puss o' the woods."

"No she warn't," cried Ina in a passion; "no more nor you, Granny! You 'se got none sich a cream of a temper your own dear self that is! an' need n't to say them thin's agin your own flesh and blood, — 'specially to a stranger chap as does n't belong to you."

"What 's the matter, Ina? What 's the stranger chap done to you that you should talk so?" said I.

"Nothing."

"Then why speak so unkindly of him?"

"'Case it pleases me."

"Blow away, then, my darling; blow as unkind winds and words as you like. I 'd do anything to please my pretty sister."

"No you would n't."

"Try me."

"Yes; for you to go and tell agin!"

"I never tell tales out of school. It 's a capital offence."

"An' you won't peach to Ikey."

"Not I, indeed. Why should I?"

"Tell me, then, why the ill-favored hound spoke that way to me, jist now."

"How should I know? I don't want to interfere with lovers' quarrels."

"Who 's a talkin' about lovers, Master Geordie! You 're alus at that game. We is n't lovers; an' I ony wants to know what I axed you about for cruriosity."

"I 'm sorry, dearie, that I can't satisfy you. You 'd better ask yourself a few questions about it. I think the good genii who guard the doors of your heart will be able to furnish you with an answer, if you will faithfully listen to them."

"I knows what you mean, Master Geordie. You thinks I 'se in the wrong; that I brote it on myself, 'case I flouted the wild lad o' the tribe. But you 're mista'en, Master Geordie! An' I ain't a goin' for to ax myself any questions, an' then I shall be teld no stories."

"Bravo, Ina. You 're plucky and beautiful enough to be the bride of a North American Indian savage. Hold on in that way, and I 'll warrant you 'll sleep on down instead of straw, — and have the lightest and merriest heart in the tents. Good by, Ina! When the fat duck 's ready we shall meet again. But hark you, dearie! though I *am* a *stranger*, you may do worse than take my advice."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IKEY AND THE GAME FOR INA.

"ALL is going on well, Ikey, — and you 'll be a happy chap yet, if you mind how you play your game. But if you once show any signs of weakness, if you let Ina think — that is to say — that you care about her, you 're a gone coon, and you 'll lose her."

"Thank'ee, Master Geordie, for the good advice. I 'll be as cruel to her as a butcher in a blue frock, altho' it 'ul go agin my nateral 'fections, an' a'most break my heart. But I 'll mek up for it, Master Geordie, when we gits spliced. For ivery hard word I says now, I 'll say a hunderd soft ones then; an' I 'se sorry that I must say the hard words afore I gits the chance o' sayin' the soft words. O won't I mek up for it! that 's all! Won't I pet her, as the big 'un petted his dog Tibby! Won't I fondle her, an' kiss her all day an' all night an' all the rest o' the time! An' sha'n't she hev the best o' the game that flies, wheresumdiver we pitches our tents! Lord! Master Geordie, how I wishes I was a squire, or a nabob, that I might drive her about wi' my own 'osses, an' put her i' a fine house, wi' lots o' flunkey boys to wait on her. I fancies her at it. Says she to the sarvant gal, says she, 'Here, wench, cum an' do my hair! An' bring me summat 's good to put to my smeller the whilst you 're about it.' An' to flunkey i' the yellow breeches, says she, 'Feller! bring in a beesom an' sweep these ere carrapets clean.' An' then if things was n't done to her mind, would n't she clout 'um, that 's all! An' that 'ud be grand, Master Geordie."

"No, Ikey, it would n't. You were both born and bred in the tents, and you 'll have to stick to the tents, and do your duty, 'in that place of life to which it has pleased God to call you,' as the old Church Catechism says."

"I s'pose we shall; an' I 'se willin' to go anywheres an' do anythin', if I can ony git my purty cousin Ina. I did n't mean that, you know, Master Geordie, about squirin' it, an' nabobin' it. I was ony cock-chaffin'."

"Well, Ikey, you now know your game, and it 'll be your fault if

you don't win it. But here comes big Toon to call us to breakfast; so mind your P's and Q's, Ikey. Good morning, Gaffer Toon! Let me feel your fist this morning; not in my face, though, but in my right hand. How are you, big 'un?"

"I 'm well, brother. Can't yer smell the stew-pot over the way? Granny wants to give her favorite his breakfast."

"All right, brother, I 'm quite ready for it. Any news?"

"Pento an' his pals went to pay a visit yesternoon to York Castle. I seed 'um pass the tents in a van; an' we 've had a friend o' your'n here."

"Of mine, brother? Who was it?"

"The pretty lady o' the rectory; but come along, now. Myra 'ul tell the bushnie chap all about it."

I went and sat down beside Myra, who looked very pale, but exquisitely beautiful. She was in good spirits too, and more like herself, as she was in times gone by, before the finger of passion had touched and burned her heart, than I had seen her for many a day. I was delighted.

"Darling," I said, "you do not know what pleasure it gives me to see you look so beautiful and so cheerful. I have long prayed that this might come to pass, and now I thank God."

"And the 'Healing Hand,' Geordie dear," she added, interrupting me.

"Yes, and the Healing Hand, darling, if you will have it so."

"It *was* so, dearest; not of my will, but His."

"And are you quite well now, Myra? Do you ail nothing?"

"Nothing, dearest. The worst is over, and the best."

"How the best, Myra?"

"My first dream of love! so bright and golden, so radiant with glory and immortality! But although the dream is gone, and will never, never more return; the love itself remains, as inextinguishable and indestructible as the Great Name himself."

"And for thee also, dear Myra, I have an inextinguishable love, and I will never leave thee, never forsake thee!"

"O Geordie, you know not what you say. In my presence you seem to be blind; lost to all things, forgetting all things; but I am forewarned, and know the truth; yet, indeed, I do not wish you to forsake me, — but to love me still. For am I not a woman?"

"Here, Master Geordie," cried big Toon, crossing over to where we sat, and knocking the gilt off our love gingerbread, — "here I say, here 's a brace o' legs, an' the breast of this 'ere fat duck as was shot the morn. You must be considerable peckish. So peck away."

"Pass over another trencher, big 'un," said I, "and thank you. Now, Myra, dearest, you must pick the breast of this jolly bird, being the tenderest part of him; and I'll fetch you some coffee in a second."

With that the meal began. "Where 's Hiram, Granny?" said I, "I don't hear his merry voice nor see his merry face amongst us. What 's got him?"

"Off to Peterboro' Brig Fair," said Granny. "He budged yesternoon."

"And where 's Tim?"

"Away amongst the villages, grinding knives and scissors, and mending old pots and pans, and rush-bottomed chairs."

"That 's his business, ain't it, Granny?"

"Yes, Master Geordie, it be."

"And does it pay him to go so many miles away from his home, and sleep at public houses, or lodging-houses all the time?"

"Not over and above you may depend, Master Geordie. But what 's he to do else? What 's any poor tawny to do but pick up what he can wi' his knowins and craft, as his forbears did? Mayhap Tim 'ul mek his thirty shillin' a week, an' hard wuck to arne it."

"Teck some more duck, Master Geordie," roared the big 'un from yon side the fire.

"Thank you, baby Toon, I have n't half devoured his legs yet. But there 's our pretty sister Ina, whose trencher 's empty, and if you have any more to spare, perhaps she 'll do me the favor to partake of it."

"I 'se had enough this time, an' thank you, Master Geordie, for thinkin' on me," said Ina.

"Welcome, pretty one!" I rejoined, "and when I next go to Bridlington, I will call at the nurseryman's, and buy you the best and sweetest flowers I can find to put into your hair, — because you 've made it look so bright and golden this morning, and have given me so much pleasure to look upon it."

"You is very good, Master Geordie, an' as I alus says, it 's just like you to be thinkin' how you can mek a body's heart glad. It 's jest es if you knowd when a gal was down i' the dumps."

"Are you down in the dumps, Ina? If so, I 'm sorry for it, and am doubly glad that I spoke the words to you just now which you say have made *you* glad."

"What ails the great Tom Boy?" asked Granny. "Has she brokt the trinkety thins that Master Geordie gived her, and is a mournin' over um? or has she got the finger-ache?"

"Don't turn the grindstone too fast, granny," said I; "you'll make the sparks fly out of the metal, if you do. Besides it is n't fair, for our pretty Ina is very good-tempered and well-behaved this breakfast time?"

"That's right, Master Geordie; teck a gal's part as has done no harm, an' said nothin' wrong. As for granny, if she goes on that how much longer I shall malice her, — though she is my granny."

"Where's Ikey?" asked Ishmael, as he suddenly looked round the circle; "what's the wolf doin'? Who knows?"

"Don't nobody know?" he asked, after a minute's pause. "It ain't like him to be away at meat time; but sin' he bes away, granny 'ul save a breakfast anyhow."

"I hope no harm's come to him, Ishmael," I rejoined.

"Harm! Master Geordie!" cried Ina, looking towards me with most beseeching eyes. "What harm could come to him? You don't think he's harmed, do you, Master Geordie?"

"I trust not, Ina; but his absence looks very suspicious, especially because he is so fond of the flesh-pots."

Ina hung her glorious head, and was evidently in much pain of mind concerning Ikey. I was sure she loved him from the first, and although I pitied her in my heart, I thought it would be a really good thing, both for her and Ikey, to cure her of her coquetry. In a few minutes after this last conversation, she managed to slip away from the circle, and I soon lost sight of her."

In the mean while, Ikey came up for his breakfast.

"Better late than never," said Toon, as the wild lad squatted himself on the grass.

"That's what I alus says, brother," replied Ikey, digging the ladle into the stew-pot, and helping himself with a bountiful hand.

"Suppose then that we rise, Myra dear; and as you are now well, you will come to my tent, will you not? And after we have talked awhile, we will have a nice stroll together; or if you like, a sail to Bridlington Bay."

"Anything you please, Geordie, dear. To be near you is all I ask."

"Come then, darling, let us go to my house at once."

CHAPTER XXIX.

POETRY TALK WITH MYRA.

THE day was likely to prove a hot one, and even now the sun had great power; so I drew back the folds of my door, that we might have plenty of air whilst we sat on the straw inside. The grass in my neighborhood was studded with daisies and buttercups, and the stream hard by made sweet music for us as it wandered past. And it was pleasant to feel that our roof was sheltered by the great beech-tree I have before spoken of, whose shadow lay all around the house in rich sunny mosaics.

"Have you anything to read to me this morning, Geordie dear," asked Myra, as I lit my pipe; "it is so long since we had a book-morning together, that I 'm pining for one."

"No, sister dear, I 've nothing to read to you; let us talk."

"Well then, dearest, let us talk; but let it be about poetry, which always refreshes me. Do you remember that little book you lent me a month ago? A little blue book edged with gold, which I liked so much, and you thought nothing of, you said?"

"O, my college chum's poems, you mean."

"Yes, I 've found one or two pieces which belong to me, and I 've learned them by heart."

"What are they, sister? Pray let me hear them as I luxuriate on the straw."

"Should you like to hear them, Geordie? They are very sad."

"Yes, I should like to hear them, Myra; and as for their being sad, my chum, you see, could n't help that, for he had been disappointed in his love, as the common saying is."

"Poor fellow! how I pity him. I shall love him all the more, now I know that, Geordie."

"Well, what does he say, Myra? Repeat the lines, dearest, as you say you have them by heart."

"You shall hear them, Geordie; and she recited the following Jeremiad: —

"O, never more will the sweet light of heaven,
The glory of the old woods, and the sea,
And the great beauty which our God hath given,
In his great love, to all the things that be,
Come back to me!

"The light is quenched within me, and the dark
Sets thick and heavy like a murderous night
Around my soul: — I hear the joyous lark,
My most loved bird! — when all the morn is bright
With dew and light;

"And the rich music of his glorious throat,
Which, whilom, winged my soul with him above,
Falls dead and leaden, like a funeral note,
And cannot wake in me again my love,
Where'er I rove.

"And yet I know that nature still is fair,
And good, and very beautiful to view;
And that my heart in its great dumb despair
Alone is changed; and not God's creatures true,
Nor God's heavens blue,

"Nor yet the glorious company of stars
Which he has set therein; — nor anything,
Or sun or planet made: — 't is my heart mars
The light that shines, and all the birds that sing,
And flowers of spring!

"And shall I live forever thus? decayed
My trunk and branches; all my blossoms gone?
O God of life and beauty! Thou hast made,
And thou canst unmake! I am but a stone,
My voice, a moan!

"Ah yes! I know that it will be forever,
This living death to me, scarce in my prime!
And that the golden dreams I loved will never
Come back to me again, in life or rhyme,
Eternity, or time!"

"You speak the truth, Myra," said I, when she had concluded; "it is indeed a sad ditty, and I cannot doubt it was forged hot and burning from the deepest fires of the heart. I was inclined to laugh before you commenced, but I am not profane enough to mock at real suffering and sorrow, such as this poem portrays. Poor chap! I did not think the iron had struck so deep."

"I knew you 'd be sorry for him when you heard the lines, dearest. It is sad to live without hope."

"Yes, I 'm sorry that any one's mind should be in a condition so appalling, that, to relieve itself for the time being, it is compelled to utter such a musical threnody of despair. But I do not believe it possible for any man of intellect to remain long in that state, — or woman either. It is a state of disease; hopelessness is insanity. There is hope even for the most wretched. No one can live without hope.

> 'Shall I, wasting in despair,
> Die because a woman 's fair?'

Asks the poet Suckling; and another writer, a great prose poet, asks also, 'Are there not many Blumines in the world?' If one woman jilts a man, or one man wrongs a woman, are there not plenty of other men and women crowding the thoroughfares and avenues of human life, waiting for the magnetic eyes and heart to draw them into a closer union?"

"True, Geordie! it is good speech enough for philosophers and weathercocks to go by; but not for the true man and the true woman. Love once, love always, and forever. There is no second love to such as these. Does not Byron say,

> 'E'en in a crowd I am alone,
> Because I cannot love but one?'

You see I do not forget my readings."

"Well, dearest, you shall have it all your own way; and I will humor you in everything, and spend all my leisure time with you, during the few days I have yet to remain in the camp."

"Few days! Oh! surely you 're not going to leave us so soon?"

"I shall be as sorry to go as you can be to part with me, darling; but I am obliged to depart."

"And therefore you read me that lesson against despair, just now. Is it not so?"

"No, sister; I did not think of it. What I said was suggested by the lines you repeated."

"Forgive me, Geordie dear; O pray forgive me! It was unkind of me to ask you such a question. I know you would not wound me. And you will love me when you are far away from me, will you not, dearest?"

"I will always love you, my sweet sister!" I replied passionately, folding her in my arms and kissing her passionately.

"Then I shall not live without hope,—for I shall have something to live for," she exclaimed, holding my heart close to hers. "But oh that we were never to part!" she added, in wild, wailing accents.

I did not reply. I was afraid of myself. So thoroughly was I again bound up in the beautiful, devoted girl, that I did not wish to part from her; nay, at this moment, I desired above all things that we might never be separated.

She soon grew calm, and, by what I could see was a strong effort, changed the subject to one that was equally as exciting and dangerous, however.

"I did not tell you, Geordie," she said, "that some time ago I received a letter from the blue-eyed lady who is one day to be yours, did I?"

"No, dearest; but Ina told me she was commissioned by her to bring a letter to you."

"And what do you think it was about?"

"I cannot tell; but I am sure it was something good."

"Yes, it was something good, Geordie; and she has the heart of an angel."

"What was it, sister?"

"She told me that she loved the gypsy fortune-teller, and felt as if she could not rest without seeing her again: promising to come to the camp very soon."

"And did she come, sister?"

"Yes, Geordie, she came. It was yesterday; and when she saw me, she put her arms lovingly round my neck, and kissed me as if I had been her sister and her equal."

"Good little girl! I shall love her all the more because she loves you, dearest."

"That's not all, Geordie dear; she said she had requested a friend to visit the camp and thank the tawnies who rescued her and the parson from the housebreakers, and to ask how she could best serve them."

"Yes, I was the friend, in my philanthropic disguise; and she did that same."

"I told her my brothers would value her thanks and gratitude, but that they would receive no gifts for what they had done. Then she said to me: 'Sister, you were unhappy when I saw you last, and I was very sorry to see it. Can I do anything to relieve you?' I told her no,—for what could she do, of all others, to make me hap-

pier, — she who has stolen from me all my happiness? although, poor heart! she does not know it, and no power in earth or heaven can help it, since so it was to be from the beginning. I do not blame her, Geordie, nor you, nor any one, although I cannot hide my own heart's bitterness. And she is so good too! She offered to share her home and fortune with me, if I would go and live with her, and promised to treat me as if I were her own sister."

"And you refused the noble girl, Myra?"

"Can you doubt it, Geordie? How could I live under the same roof tree with you two, and witness your caresses and fond ways with her? Do you think I could bear that, Geordie? Why, every kiss you gave her would stab me to the heart like a knife!"

"But you would come in for your share of kisses too, Myra dear; and if you were not my wife, you would at least be my sister then, as now."

"I should envy the wife's kisses, Geordie; and soon learn, I fear, to despise the sister's. No, Geordie, I could not bear it."

"You would prefer, then, to live away from me altogether rather than live with me as my sister."

"Yes, when you are married; and yet dear, dear Geordie! I only wish to see *you* happy. *I* must take my chance."

"But I should be much happier to have my pet chi with me, to share in my pleasures and sorrows, than I could possibly be without her; and I see no sufficient reason yet why you should not accept Violet's offer."

"It cannot be," she replied sadly, but firmly. "It 's not my fate. I know my fate, Geordie, as well as I know yours and hers."

At this moment Ikey came running across the green. "Master Geordie!" he cried at the top of his voice, "Jesus Christ's name hes bin writ on the parson's gate-post, an' they say down in the village that Paul Dradda did the deed; and that it 's a very evil thin' to do; and there 's the devil to pay about it. You 'se a Christ child, Master Geordie, an' knows; is it a evil thin' to write that name on the gate-post?"

"It 's not very decorous and well-behaved in Paul," I replied, "but I see no crime in it."

"Jist what I teld the fisher chaps. Says I: 'Where 's the harm? It 's ony a few strokes made by a lump o' chalk, an' I could lick it all out wi' my lolly.' 'But,' says they, 'the parson says it 's blastedy, an' is agoin' to hev Paul afore the beak for it.' 'Well,' says I, 'what can the beak do wi' him? Ain't a chap free to write what

names he 's a mind to on a gate or on a wall, wi'out bein' sent to York for it?' 'No,' says they; 'it 's blastedy.' What is blastedy, Master Geordie? They meks it out as summats worse nor killin' a gamekeeper; an' I can't undo the puzzle, not no how."

"I don't know what 'blastedy' is, Ikey, any more than you do, and I never met a law man yet who could tell me. But I 'm afraid, from what you say, that Paul 's got into a scrape; and if that Flamboro' parson can 'catch him on the hip,' he 'll punish him, I know, for old grievance' sake. Poor Paul! his head 's all a-craze against parsons; but he 'll find the blackbirds too much for him. I think, Myra dear, I will go and see what it all means. The law against blasphemy is terribly severe; and perhaps I may be in time to save Paul from its clutches."

I gave my beauty a parting kiss, and, climbing over the hedge, made a crow-line across the moor to the village.

CHAPTER XXX.

BLASPHEMY. — CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!

"PAUL 'S cumed out strong at last, sir," said Bill Gibbons, as I met him in Flamboro' town street. "Why, mon, he 's a infidee!"

"Infidee, Bill! what 's that?"

"A chap as does n't believe in a God or Devil."

"Pshaw, Bill! what put such moonshine as that under your sou'-wester?"

"T' parson says so, sir," he replied, "an' Paul 's bin a writin' 'Jesus Christ' on t' rectory gate-post."

"Well, Bill, suppose he has; it does n't follow that he 's an 'infidee' on that account."

"But all t' chaps says he is beside; an' what iverybody says sall be true, ony way you can fix it."

"What everybody says is almost sure to be a lie, Bill. Put no faith in 'everybody.' He always was, is, and shall be fool, as well as liar."

"Onyhow, sir, t' constable 's gotten t' warrant to tek him up; an' Paul 'ul hev to gang t' York Castle."

"We shall see, Bill, about that; and if Paul should get into limbo, why there is such a thing as getting him out again."

"But if he 's a infidee, sur," put in Mr. Snorra the "schuelmaester," who came up whilst Bill and I were talking, "he does n't desarve to git out agin. I like Paul varry well, an' he 's a good 'un, an' alus wur, to his ode mother an' his mates, — an' all the little childer i' these parts likes him too, — but if he don't believe i' his Prayer-Book, an' teks to writin' Jesus Christ's name on a gate-post, he 's a infidee you sees, sur, an' must be punished."

"But what have you, or what has any one else to do with Paul's belief, Mr. Snorra? I suppose he 's accountable to his Maker for that, and not to you, nor the parson either. Your Methodist friends don't believe in the Prayer-Book, and you don't call them 'infidees,' do you?"

"Not exalety, sur; but you sees they 's all on 'um heritickers."

"And what is a 'heriticker' but an 'infidee,' Mr. Snorra?"

"Varry true, sur, as you says; but they does believe i' a Devil, Mr. Leeds gen'leman!"

"They've very good reason to do so, Mr. Snorra; he's the best friend they have. Take the Devil away from their theological calendar, and there's an end of their trade."

Whilst we were thus talking I beheld a crowd of people coming up the lane, and Ben Olaff running at the top of his speed towards us.

"They're takin' poor Paul up afore the squire, sir," he exclaimed in great excitement, as soon as he got within hearing distance; "though what the chap's done's more nor I can mek out. That d—d lubberly parson says he's goin to put him into quod for chalkin' the name of Jesus Christ on a gate-post. Is there ony law, sir, for chalkin' that ere name on a gate-post?"

"That all depends on the swearings and other circumstances, Mr. Olaff," said I. "A bad, malicious man, like your Flamboro' parson, with plenty of money to back him, might make out a case against Paul on the fact of this writing, and on what he said at the meeting the other night, which would induce a jury to convict him, perhaps, of what our learned friends here call 'blastedy'; and it is quite true that such offences, so called, are punishable by the common law of England,—although, since my friend Holyoake's trial, I have never heard of any attempt being made to enforce this law, which law, look you! Mr. Olaff, I hold to be infamous, and subversive of civil and religious liberty, and of the inalienable rights of freemen."

By this time the crowd were close upon us. Some were hissing and hooting poor Paul, crying aloud, as aforetime, in the tragedy of Calvary, "He's a infidee! he's a infidee! he desarves to be burnt at stake. T' jail's too good for him!" Whilst others, and especially the women,—mothers of the little children who loved Paul, and whom Paul loved,—took his side, and, with tears running down their cheeks, expostulated indignantly with the ignorant savages who surrounded him.

He was handcuffed to the constable, and did not appear at all excited, but held up his head proudly, as if with the consciousness of a martyr, and his black, moony eyes flashed defiance upon the insulting faces which everywhere met his gaze. He said not a word, however, but marched along as if he were the hero of a triumphal procession.

Poor old Polly came hobbling in the rear, smoking her short, black pipe, weeping, and abusing everybody who came near her.

"What 's t' lad done, Mister, I sud loick to know?" she said, recognizing and coming up to me as I stood on the flag-stone. "What for now is they tekin' my Paul to York Touzer. I can't mek it out, an' there 's nobbody 'ul tell me. What 's Paul done, Mister? Poor lad! no harm, I 'se sure. He wadn't hut a fly, — an' niver did a wrang thing i' all his life. Tell the ode beer 'oman, Mister, what 's it all mean."

"Paul 's done nothing wrong, that I know of, Polly, and you need n't fret yourself, for I don't believe they 'll put him in jail. It 's all along o' the parson's spite, Polly, 'cause Paul did his dressins for him at the meetin' t' other night. And I 'd advise you not to go any farther, but to return and look after your beer-house. You can't do him any good, and they won't let you in, I fear, when he goes before the squire."

"Me go back, Mister! Me leave my son Paul, now he 's i' sorrer! What 's the ugly hound a tekin' the ode 'oman for?" she cried indignantly, between her teeth, as she hurried abruptly away after the crowd.

"Right, old woman!" said I to myself; "a silly sheep will follow its own lamb to the slaughter. It is nature's instinct, and thy Paul is thy helm, Polly, and keeps thee womanly."

Then, turning round to the fishermen, I wished them good morrow, and made my way to Paul through the crowd.

"The black Cock o' the Headland 's got his beak into me you see, sir," he began, without evincing any sign of surprise or pleasure at my sudden appearance; "but," he added, "I 'll cut his wattles yet, and it 'ul go hard if I don't wring the neck of the pretty blackbird in the end."

"What have you been doing, Paul?"

"I 'se committed murder, sir, I 'se crucified the parson by writing the name of Jesus Christ, this morning, at sunrise, on his own gate-post."

"But what made you do that, Mr. Dradda?"

"To mock him by reminding him of the Lord, who, to my certain knowledge, has n't been inside the rectory walls since this parson went to dwell there. And you see how it has stung him," he added, pointing to his bonds.

"That man is no Christian, Paul, I know; but I did n't think he was wicked enough to proceed to such extremities of wickedness as this."

"Christian!" he cried, in derision; "did you ever know a black-

bird to be a Christian? I'se found them all to be what I dare not trust myself to speak. Christian! were the Jesuits of Calcutta, who educated me in their college that I also might become a blackbird, Christians, think you? And when I found them out, and got at their secrets, and saw what infamous schemes they were contriving to enslave and demoralize wives, daughters, families, and communities, — and tore my blackbird's coat into rags before their eyes, cursing them, and leaving them, — was it Christian, think you, to kidnap me afterwards in my own house, and confine me under ground for two years in a dungeon, with rats and scorpions for my companions? Yes sir, it *was* priests' Christianity, — but it was n't Christ's, — and that made me write the name on the gate-post."

Here, then, was the secret of Paul's hatred of parsons, — and here was the cue to his madness. That horrible dungeon at Calcutta had shattered his intellect, — and it was now clear to me that he was not at all times — even in his natural state — responsible for his actions, much less when he was under the influence of opium.

When we arrived — with all the *posse comitatus* — opposite the encampment, I shook Paul by the hand, and bidding him keep his heart up and fear not, dropped behind, and shortly after made for the tents.

"Where 's big Toon, Myra?" said I, as I approached her door.

"He 's just gone down the dike with his gun to kill some rabbits for the midday meal."

"Here, then, Ikey! ho! Ikey! run after the big 'un and tell him to turn his shanks homeward as fast as he can, 'case he 's 'tickerly wanted. Do you hear, boy?"

"Ikey hears," said he, setting off in a brisk run.

"How about the man who wrote that name on the gate-post, Geordie, dear?"

"They 've taken him before the squire for examination, sister; and if the parson can rule, he 'll be sent to York to be tried for blasphemy."

"I don't understand your bushnie law," she said, "nor your bushnie religion; but there 's neither justice in the one, nor love nor charity in the other, if such things as this can be done openly in their name."

"You speak the truth, Myra darling, and I 'm going to talk to the squire with Ishmael, as soon as I change these gentleman's garments. He only knows me as a gypsy, you see, at present; and he told us all the other night after the 'peachment' of Mr. Corby, that

he would do us a favor for the service we 'd rendered him, 'justice or no justice.' I 'm going to try him."

When big Toon returned I was dressed, and ready to depart. I told him what I proposed to do, and the good fellow agreed joyfully to accompany me. So off we started.

On the road we met with many stragglers and laggards who had fallen off from the train of Paul's followers, thinking, no doubt, that it was useless going any farther, — or at all events of hurrying, — as there was nothing for them to see or hear at the end of the journey, — since the examination was sure to be private.

When we came up to the hall, Mr. Dradda and the constable were standing together — hand to hand — before the kitchen door, surrounded by a troop of Flambruffers who were anxiously waiting to hear the result of the trial. Toon and I passed into the kitchen at once, without recognition from Paul, and the butler, who happened to be passing that way at the time, spoke to us very kindly, and invited us to taste the old Graham ale. Big Toon was only too glad of the chance, and so thanking Mr. Thomas we sat down at the long oak table, and my pal once more did justice to the hospitalities of the house.

Mr. Jones brought in the ale, and along with it a large Cheshire cheese in a japanned tray, and a loaf of white wheaten-bread.

"Glad to see you again," said Jones as he set the good commons before us. "Is there any thwing up that sets you to the hawl this fine mornin'? I sees there 's a feller outswide in the handycwuffs, — a thweef or a picketpocket no doubt; an' perwhaps you 've cumed as witnesswes against him."

"No, Mr. Jones," said I, "we hes n't cum agin' the chap outside; an' he is n't a thief nor a 'picketpocket' nuther; but we wants to speech the squire on very 'ticular business, an' shall be obligated to you if you 'll jist tell him so."

"Squire 's engaged at preswent wi' the parson frwom Flambro'; but as soon as he 's at libertwy I 'll twell him what you sway."

Presently the squire's bell rang, and it was Mr. Jones's duty to answer it; so off he went. When he returned he said he had "spokwen" to the squire, and we "was" to walk into the library, which we did straightway.

Now the squire, although a very good man, was superstitiously attached to the Church, and considered himself one of the main pillars of it in that part of the country. And this fact will account in some degree for the astuteness and bigotry which he showed during

our interview. Nothing kills a man's common sense, and strips him of all the attributes of mercy, compassion, and justice, like a one-sided theological idea. Once possess him of this, and he is blind to all beyond it; becomes proud, haughty, despotic, and would sacrifice his best friend to establish the sacredness and infallibility of its character.

Hat in hand we walked into the library, where we found the squire sitting in his great high-backed chair, which was covered with red Russian leather; and the table groaned with law books, from Blackstone to Coke and Littleton, and Burns's Justice. These books had evidently been consulted lately, and I have no doubt the parson's eyes had been over them that morning.

"Well, men!" said he, as we advanced to the table, "what's the matter, ecod? What do you want? Any more Corbys to peach, eh? Ecod! the rascal. I hope he like his lodgings. What do you want, men?"

"There's a Flambruff chap, your honor," said I, "as is a comin' afore your worship this mornin' charged by t' parson of blastedy, 'case he was silly enough to write the name o' th' Lord on a gate-post. An' you sees, your honor, that we tawnies knows and can prove that Paul Dradda — that's his name, your worship — is n't in his right mind, but is daft at times; an' so we've cumed to ask your honor, in case your honor thinks the matter 'portant enough to look into 't, — which, beggin' your pardon, squire, an' savin' your worship's presence, I does n't, for one, — I say, with these provisals, we've cumed to ask your honor to be merciful to Paul, and not send him for trial to York, — but, mayhap, to talk t' poor lad, an' advise him to keep his chalk in his breeches pocket for t' futur."

"Sartunlee, squire, your honor!" put in the big 'un; "for Paul's a good chap, an' bears a good carater all round the cuntree where he's known; an' niver did wrang to man or 'oman, as the street ballad says of bold Robin Hood. So please, squire, be merciful to poor Paul."

"Ecod, men! you're a queer lot, you gypsy chaps are; and by God I believe the common report lies about you! How care you now to be so interested in this man? How care you, ecod?"

"'Case he's a good chap, squire! an' alus ready to do a good turn to any poor body as needs help. He's brote plenty of gowd wi' him, squire, fra Ingies, — so he ain't poor, — ain't Paul; an' he's as generous in his way as you be in your big hospitality, squire."

"What, he pays for your drinkings, I suppose, ecod! Is that what you mean?"

"No, your worship! not by no means. We tawnies is a proud people, an' alus pays for our own."

"And you 've come here to speak for him out of sheer good will, with no 'promise to pay' at the back of it."

"Yes, your honor."

"Will you swear that, ecod, men! Will you swear that?" he cried, much excited, and rising up from his seat.

"Yes, squire, we 'll swear it."

"Ecod, men! I believe you," he replied, taking a long breath and dropping heavily into his chair again. "I believe you, I say," he resumed; "but I can't promise to do anything for this man. The law must take its course."

"But is it such a dreadful thing, squire, for to write the Lord's name on a gate-post?"

"More dreadful than you heathen tawnies can understand, ecod! What says the Scriptures? 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.'"

"Is that in the book, your honor."

"Yes, poor man! It 's one of the commandments, ecod! And I 'm sorry you are so ignorant of the commandments. Why don't you go to church, man? Why don't you go to church, ecod? The parson 'ud soon put you straight as to what 's what in these things, ecod!"

"Perhaps he would, squire; but we tawnies 'ud rather see a man lay square i' ivery direction without knowin' these things, than lay crooked all ways, a knowin' on 'um. Why did n't this Flambruff parson now, — askin' your honor's pardon for speakin' so plain, — why did n't he, instead o' takin' the law on poor Paul for doin' what he thought was wrong, try a little o' the Gospel which, as I 'se heered, tells us all to be marciful, and to love one another. The Methodykes cumed to our camp last year, your honor, an' they teld us that Christ went about a doin' o' good to iverybody, an' that he forgived all his inemies, an' even the cruel chaps as killed him wi' their bloody spears. An' if t' parson pretends to be a follower o' hisen, — why does n't he do the same?"

"Ecod, man! Thou shouldst ha' been a parson thyself, I think. But it won't do. Law is law; and I 'm here to administer it by my oath faithfully between the Queen and her subjects; and if the par-

son proves blasphemy to my satisfaction, I shall send him to the sitting magistrates, — of whom, you see, ecod! I 'm one myself, — and I 've no doubt they 'll commit him for trial at York."

"But won't your honor try and soften it down a little, and recommend him to the parson's merciful consideration, — if he 's got any mercy i' all his bowels, which I fear he 's all guts your honor, — an' I begs your pardon," said I.

"I can't promise to do anything for him, I tell you. If he 's allowed to go free, he 'll corrupt the whole parish. It 's no common sin, you see, this. It compromises the sacred character of the Church. No, it 's no common sin, you see, ecod! I 'd have stretched a point to please you chaps, — for the sake of bygones, — if it had been a poaching fray, or a little petty larceny; but blasphemy, men! blasphemy, ecod! There 's no getting over that. I must stand by the Church, ecod! and protect the parson. A pretty thing, indeed, for a Justice of the Peace to let a blasphemer go free, ecod! What would become of religion and the public morals, I should like to know if he were, ecod!"

"Release unto us then Barabbas," said I, "and let this man be crucified!"

"Eh, ecod! What 's that? what 's that you say, ecod? I thought you 'd never read the Scriptures, ecod! And here I find you quoting like a parson."

"It 's ony a text, your honor, that Billy Dawson, the Methodyke, preached from last time he cumed to convert us."

"O, ah! ecod! Billy Dawson! Who 's he, ecod?"

"A chap as hes got plenty to say for hissen, squire; an' it 's as good as a play to hear him, ony not quite so funny; tho' he tells tales too i' his sarments that 'ud mek a block o' wood laugh; but that 's ony nows and thens; for I tell your honor, it 's no joke to hear him when he 's a mind to be serious, 'specially when he 's a talkin' about the Great Day, an' all the peoples o' the airth a comin' up to Jedgment. He fair freightens a chap, an' meks his hair stan' up a end, like a hedgehog's back. An' Billy hates t' church, squire, and all its parsons. Now I wants to knows why they does n't pull up Billy Dawson for blastedy."

"Ecod, man! so they ought."

"Why don't they then, squire, these brave parsons what loves the Lord! instead of falling foul of sich small game as Poor Paul?"

"Well, man, we must make an example of somebody, ecod! And it 's time we begin if Billy what 's-his-name does his blasphemies

with Sunday regularity. We'll have him next, ecod! We'll teach him to abuse the Established Church, ecod! And now, men, good day! I must attend to business. I'm sorry I can't oblige you. But, ecod! I must uphold the Church. We'll have no blasphemy, ecod! in Flambruff."

So saying, the squire rose from his seat, and as we were going out of the door, he called to us: —

"You know where my kitchen is, men. Remember you don't leave the hall without refreshment. Good day to ye! Sorry I can't oblige you, ecod! Church must be upheld."

I was sorry for the result of this interview, — and sorry also that so good hearted a man as the squire should be so church and parson ridden. There was no help for it, however, and we remained until the examination of Paul was concluded, when we learned that his case was to undergo a further examination by the sitting magistrates, and I now felt sure he would be committed for trial and sent to York.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JESUS CHRIST'S NAME ON A GATE-POST. — WHAT COMES OF IT!

"BABY Toon!" said I, as we emerged from the squire's coach-road into the "King's highway," — or, to be more loyal, the "*Queen's* highway," — "I should like to hear this examination of Paul's case before the sitting magistrates to-day, — and as you have never been inside my rooms at Bridlington, suppose you go there with me and eat a luncheon. I expect letters are lying there for me; and besides which I have a horse in the stable which I should like you to see. Are you willing, Baby Toon?"

"Willin' to go anywhere, and do anythin' for you, Master Geordie," he replied.

"Then let us foot the turnpike with a will, brother; my place is only about a mile off."

We walked along for some minutes in silence; at length Ishmael said:

"I 'm a thinkin', Master Geordie, what a queer thin' this Church religion of your'n is; an' I 'm as glad as a May mornin' that me and my tribe don't belong to it."

"Yes, big 'un," said I, "it 's full of contradictions. It has a Calvinistic creed, and an Armenian clergy, — but I forgot that you don't know anything about these hard names; but what I mean, however, is this, — the creed is one thing, and the clergy professing to believe in it preach dead against it, — and so are another thing, right opposite to it, and opposed to it. They profess also to believe in the gospel of Christ, which is glad tidings of love, mercy, charity, to all the world, and they act out — as this Flambruff parson is doing — the gospel of hate, according to the charities of the Devil. But here we are close to the house, Toon; so let us hurry on and drop this subject, for I 'm heartily sick of it."

We found Mrs. Jones very busy with the "gentlefolks," who had come from Bridlington Quay to look at her husband's museum of birds, — the worthy man himself being absent on business. She

was not too busy to greet me, however, as I entered the house, although sho stared wide-eyed at big Toon, wondering, I dare say, how Mister George could bring such a wild looking customer as that to his country house. And thinking that Ishmael might be hurt at her inquisitorial looks, which were expressive also of undisguised astonishment and disgust, I said to her:

"This is my good friend, Ishmael Toon, Mrs. Jones, at whose camp I've been staying so long, and at whose hands I have received so much kindness and attention. Will you cook us a two-pound beefsteak, Mrs. Jones, at your earliest convenience, and send it up into my sitting-room along with six bottles of porter; for my friend Ishmael, you see, is very dry this morning; and I wish to show him every hospitality.

"Six bottles, Mister George!" she exclaimed. "My goodness me! Why, them bottles is all quarts, sir."

"Well, Mrs. Jones, if they be gallons I'll have up six bottles, if you please. I'm not going to stint my pal to a quart of porter."

"Just as you likes, Mister George. The porter's your own, and you've a right to do what you will with it."

"As quick as you can then, good dame!" I replied, mounting the stair to my room, and followed by my mate.

"Whew!" I exclaimed, "what a host of letters!" as I beheld them lying on the table. "Here's work for me, big 'un. So do you light your pipe, whilst I open these dumb talkers, and see how many of them require to be answered to-day."

"Can't do it, Master Geordie," said he, looking round the handsomely furnished room with no little respect and reverence; "I shud spile the riggin' o' the tent, you see, if I was to blow my baccer smoke in it," he added.

"Devil a bit, brother. Smoke away! for as the Welshman says, in *Roderick Random*, 'it has a fine aromatic flavor,' and suits my nostrils better than all the musks and stink-pots which my civilized friends call perfumes. Smoke away, I say, brother; I'll join you in a second."

Thus encouraged, he pulled "Black Billy" out of his hat-band, — where he always carried it, — and having "stuffed his inards wi' the weed," lighted the same, and blew away.

Very good was the odor of the smoke to me, — better than that of the best cigars ever turned out of the plantations of Havana; and King James, the pedant and sensualist, lied in his throat when, in his "Counterblast to Tobacco," he said that it was "hateful to the

eye, hideous to the smell, hot to the taste; and in the horrible stinking fumes thereof most resembled the smoke of the Stygian pit that was bottomless." I suspect that James had a bad stomach from excess of eating and debauchery, and that he was not strong and healthy enough to endure, much less enjoy a good smoke. Sir Walter Raleigh loved it, and his last request was for a glass of wine to keep his limbs steady, poor fellow! they were so shattered by rheumatism caused by his long confinement in that damp cell in the Tower; "and I should not like the mob to think," he added, "that I trembled at death, and was afraid to die. So, good sir, a glass of wine and a pipe!"

"I joined the big man speedily; and when Mrs. Jones brought up the luncheon, not forgetting the six bottles of porter, she could scarcely see the table to set it on, for the fog; and coughed wofully.

"Bless me, Mister George!" she said as soon as she could get her breath, "how can you live i' all this baccer smook? It 'ud kill me."

"What 's amiss, Mrs. Jones?" quoth I; "there 's no particular quantity of smoke in the room that I know of."

"Why, I can hardly see you thruf it, Mister George. Pray, sir, do let me open the window."

"Not at all, Mrs. Jones. The temperature is very agreeable, I assure you."

"Well," she replied, "some folks hes varry curious idees o' what 's agreeable, I maun say. Now there 's a gentleman as hes tooked the front room below for a fortnight, as smooks; but he alus opens the window and gits the fresh air when he 's smookin'. An' I thinks, Mister George, beggin' your pardon, sir, that it 's all the better for his health."

"Oh! you 've got another lodger then, have you Mrs. Jones? A gentleman! well, now what sort of a man is he?"

"He 's a varry nist man, I assure you, Mister George; an' gives no trouble. He 's almost alus a writin'; an' he hes as many letters every mornin' post as you hes."

"The Devil! I should like to know who he is. What 's his name, Mrs. Jones?"

"Profanoake, or sum sich like name. Ony how, he 's a nist gentleman."

"Well, Big Toon," said I to that worthy, "if this don't beat all! Will you believe it, that a very dear friend of mine is sitting at this

minute in the room below us? Little does he think who 's above him; and right glad am I that he is here. He 's the very man to deal with Paul's case. Good Mrs. Jones," I added, turning to my fat landlady, and taking an address card from my writing-case, "be kind enough to present this to your new lodger, with my compliments, and say I shall be glad to see him to luncheon."

"Well," said she, staring wide-eyed, first at me and then at the card; "if this 'ere ain't a rum 'un, I hopes I shall niver see my salvation! An' is the gentleman your friend, Mister George? I never heerd the like; an' who 'd a thote it!"

"Make haste, Mrs. Jones, if you please, for we 're pressed for time."

"Yes, sir," she replied, turning suddenly round, and waddling out of the door.

"I 'd better be budgin', Master Geordie," said Toon, knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

"Why so, brother?"

"'Cause, you sees, I 'se not fit company for gen'lemen. You 'se all very well, Master Geordie! an' is, as I may say, one o' us, an' I 'se at home wi' you; but another chap might look down on me, an' think the tawny might as well be settin' under his own tarpaulin'."

"Nobody shall look down on you, brother, in my house. I 'm master here, and I 'll have whom I like here, and no questions asked, and no fine airs taken; and you should n't budge, Gaffer Toon, if I were about to entertain the Queen of England, — which is n't likely to be the case."

A knock at the door stopped the jaw inside the room, and I rose eagerly to let my friend in.

"How are you, January?" he exclaimed, shaking me heartily by the hand. "Who 'd have thought of seeing you here! Do you remember that wild drive we had together — that wet and cloudy day — over the savage moors of Meltham, up to the 'Isle of Skye,' and 'Bilsby Jacks,' where the murder was committed? Faith, I 've never forgotten that glorious day! I believe your horse was sandalled with lightning, on purpose for the journey. What 's got that horse, January?"

"He 's in the stable now, old fellow! And when we 've eaten and drunken, we 'll go and look at him if you like. I 've a friend here who 's a good judge of horseflesh. Let me introduce you to him. Ishmael Toon is his name, and he is, as you may see, a gypsy by race and birth; a good chap, and my friend, in whose camp I have

been living for some time, and mean yet to live for a few days. This gentleman's name is Profanoake, Ishmael!"

"Glad to see you, friend," said Profanoake, "and I should much like to pay you a visit before I leave these parts. We Londoners don't often have the chance of seeing a live gypsy, and a real encampment. What do you say, then, friend? Will you invite me to come and eat and sleep in your wigwam?"

"Ony friend o' Master Geordie's, sir, 'ud be welcome at the tents; an' if you comes, we 'll find good words an' good eatin' for you, tho' I 'se not much to say about the lodgin', which is a blanket an' a bundle o' straw."

"Capital! quite romantic! I tell you what, January, I mean to go back with you. When do you return?"

"As soon as these importunities are satisfied," said I, pointing to the letters; "and as soon as we learn the result of a certain trial for alleged blasphemy, which is to come off this morning at Bridlington."

"Trial for blasphemy, do you say?" he asked, with a face so eager and earnest, yet so stern and solemn in its expression, that I knew the announcement had stirred up old, sad, and bitter memories within him.

"Yes," I replied, "that 's the truth, neither more nor less. But come, let us discuss the beefsteak; it 's getting cold."

So we seated ourselves at the table, and whilst my friend and I talked, Big Toon, at my request, drew the corks of the porter bottles and drank with power.

I related to Profanoake all the circumstances of the case, — which were few and simple enough, — and told how Toon and I had been to the squire that morning on Paul's behalf, and with what success. He was deeply interested, but said he did not believe any bench of magistrates could be found at this day to commit a man for trial on so grave a charge, with such slight and foolish evidence against him. I had my doubts about it, however; the animus and bigotry of the squire made me suspicious of all the rest of his brethren.

"What time do the magistrates commence sitting, January?" he asked.

"Twelve o'clock. It is now eleven."

"There 's time enough, then," he replied, rising from the table, "for a smoke. Have you got any good tobacco? By the way, talking of good tobacco reminds me of a capital joke which happened the other night in one of our aristocratic saloons. Lord John

Russell gave a large soirée, to which Alfred Tennyson was invited; and during the evening his lordship, sauntering up and down his magnificent halls, doing the agreeable to his guests, happened to recognize Tennyson: 'Haw! Mr. Tennyson, how d' ye do? Glad to see you. Haw! you 've been travelling in Europe, lately, I hear. How did you like Venice, haw? Fine things to be seen in Venice! Did you visit the Bridge of Sighs, haw?'

"'Yes, my lord.'

"'And saw all the pictures, haw! and works of art in that wonderful city, did you not, haw?'

"'I did n't like Venice, my lord!'

"'Haw! Indeed! Why not, Mr. Tennyson?'

"'They had no good cigars there, my lord; and I left the place in disgust.'

"'Indeed! haw! Good evening, Mr. Tennyson, haw!'

"All this is fact, January, I assure you. I had it from a friend of Tennyson's, to whom he related it. So, now, for your good tobacco, or I shall leave the place in disgust."

I soon supplied my friend from a bag of good old Virginian, which he seemed to relish very much.

"You 've come here for the sake of the mineral waters and the bathing, I suppose, Profanoake, have you not?"

"Yes; and to enjoy a fortnight's quiet. I am worked to death. Lecturing, writing, and the direction and responsibility of my large business concern in Fleet Street have told a tale on my constitution, and I need rest; although if they commit this man for blasphemy I don't think I shall get any, for I shall feel called upon then, not only on account of my own historic position as the organizer and leader of my party, but on public grounds, and in defence of the liberty of the subject, to enter the lists in his behalf. I don't think, however, as I said, that the magistrates will stultify themselves by committing him."

We went on talking until it was time to go, when I said to him: "You had better trot out before me and this little Baby here. I have my own reasons for appearing in court to-day in my gypsy disguise, — and it would n't be becoming in a gentleman cockney to have two mangy tawnies dangling at his side."

"As you please, January. We shall meet here again, I suppose, after Paul's case is disposed of."

"By all means." And so my friend went his ways.

There was a very thin attendance at the court-house when we ar-

rived, and only one magistrate on the bench; and as it required two to make a quorum, no business could be proceeded with at present. At length Squire Graham and the Flamboro' parson appeared, the latter taking his seat with the magistrates. Paul was then placed in the dock, and the parson, after conversing a few minutes with the magistrates of the bench, rose to state his charge against the prisoner.

In front of the bench sat Profanoake with a note-book and pencil before him, ready to make a report of the proceedings. The parson's eye caught him in a moment, and interpreted his intention so well that he drew back and whispered the squire, who in his turn overhauled the "chiel amang 'em takin' notes," and then with matchless indecorum he leant forward and exclaimed, "Hey there! you, sir! What are you going to do with that book and pencil?"

"I 'm going to make a report of the case before the bench, your worship," said Profanoake.

"O, you are, are you? And who gave you leave to come here and report what is done within these walls?"

"The law and usage of England, I believe, your worship. Courts of justice are usually open to all in this country, and especially to representatives of the press."

"There 's no precedent of that sort here in Bridlington, sir; nothing to justify us in permitting you to take notes. No reporter was ever here before."

"I do not wish to appear rude, your worship, or disrespectful to the bench," said Profanoake, "but here I am with my note-book, and here I shall remain and take down all that transpires in this case, unless you see fit to use force to prevent me."

"What paper do you report for, sir? And, upon my word, you carry it off with a high hand."

"I decline to answer any questions of that sort, your worship; and pardon me for saying so, you have no kind of right to put such questions to me?"

"Have n't I, ecod? Have n't I? Don 't you know that I 'm a county magistrate, sir?"

"I had not the honor to be acquainted with that fact before, your worship; but I 'm sure the county ought to be proud of your worship."

"Hem! hem!" coughed the squire. "I don't know about that, you sir, ecod! I don't know about that. But we 'll have no reporters here. There 's no precedent for it, ecod!"

"Then it is your intention to use force to prevent me from taking notes, is it, your worship?"

"Why that's not exactly what I wish, ecod! you see, sir. But you've heard the wishes and desires and opinions of the Bench, and you'd do well, ecod, to pay proper respect to them."

"I respect, sir, the liberty of the subject and the liberty of the press more than anything else; and allow me to remind your worship, that, in your character as a magistrate, you are bound to protect and sustain both."

"A pretty kettle of fish, indeed, ecod! when a magistrate on the bench is to be dictated to by a what-do-ye-call-'em chap as writes for newspapers. What is your name, sir?"

"I am not in the witness box, your worship, nor am I a criminal; and I think you have no kind of jurisdiction over me. I am not inclined to answer your worship."

"O, you are n't, eh! Upon my word, sir, ecod, you're pretty insolent. I ask you again, what is your name, and where do you come from?"

"It is useless for your worship to waste breath in putting such questions. You might as well ask the wind whence it cometh and whither it goeth. It would answer just as soon as I."

"Then I'll commit you, ecod, sir. I'll commit you. Write out his *mittimus*, clerk, — write it out, I say, and I'll sign it."

"As you please, sir," said Profanoake; "you clearly don't know what you're doing, nor what your real power is, nor what my right as a subject is. Commit me if you please, and I promise you, you shall live to repent it."

"Eh! what's that, ecod? You threaten me, do you? threaten the Bench, ecod! A month in York jail will cure you, ecod! I've a notion, — eh, sir? What do you say to York jail, sir?"

Profanoake smiled contemptuously, and did not condescend to reply, but began writing in his note-book, which so enraged the worthy squire, that he called a policeman to remove him from the court."

I saw that the Junior Magistrate — the squire was Senior and Chairman of the Bench — was very uncomfortable, and nervously fidgety during the whole of this remarkable scene; and when the squire called for a policeman, he rose and whispered in his ear. Then they sat down together, and had a long talk, during which the squire was much excited. Presently, however, he became calm, and his face assumed a distressed and yet serious aspect, — as if he

felt himself in a quandary. At last he flung himself back in his chair, crossed his legs, and, fixing his eyes on the ceiling, exclaimed, quite loud enough to be heard where I stood, "Then you must do it, ecod! for d—n me if I can, or will."

The Junior Magistrate, with much mildness and dignity in his manner, then rose and said to Profanoake:

"The Bench has consulted, sir, respecting your right to report, and have come to the conclusion that you can do so at your pleasure; although it is not usual for reporters to attend this court; and that is the reason why there has been this misunderstanding, which no one regrets more than I do."

Profanoake rose, and bowed gracefully to the magistrate, and so ended the prologue to poor Paul's trial.

The magistrate then asked what was the charge against the prisoner.

"Blasphemy, your worship," replied the officer who had him in custody.

"What? what 's that you say you hev agin my son Paul?" cried Polly Dradda from the body of the court. "Spake up, Mister, — do spake up! an let the ode beer 'oman know what they 've taen her son Paul up for."

"Silence there, in the court!" roared a stentorian voice; and the magistrate added:

"The court cannot be interrupted, and if this indecorum is repeated, the person must be put outside."

"O pray, your worship, pity the 'ode mother, an' tell her what her son 's been a doin'. It 's note varry bad, your worship, is it? My Paul never did note bad, your worship, i' all his life."

Again the same voice roared out "Silence!" and the officer looked to the Bench for the signal to remove Polly from the court. But the magistrate was a kind-hearted man, and had pity upon poor old Polly of the beer-house, and said to her:

"My good woman, you must not ask any more questions; if you do, I shall be obliged to have you turned out. Your son is charged with blasphemy, — and you will learn what that is, if you don't know already, before his examination is over."

"Thank your honor," cried Polly; "tho' I 'se as wise as I was afore. But it ain't a gallus matter, your honor, is it?"

The people near by Polly, many of them her old neighbors at home, now urged her to be quiet; and I saw Ben Olaff edging his way up to her, I had no doubt for the same purpose.

The parson then said: —

"I have a sad but sacred duty to perform to-day, your worships; the like of which will not, I hope, fall to my lot again. And I trust your worships will believe that, in bringing the prisoner before your tribunal, I am actuated only by pure and conscientious motives, and the love I bear for my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I charge the prisoner, then, your worships, with having written the holy name of the Saviour upon the rectory gate at Flamboro', in contempt for that name, and in order to provoke the ridicule and mockery of passers by. I also charge him in that he uttered — at a late infidel meeting held in the Methodist school-room, at the same place — blasphemous words calculated to bring the Church, the clergy, and the Christian religion into contempt, — all which I am prepared to prove."

"What have you to say to these charges, prisoner?"

"First of all, your worships, that they are not yet proved against me. But I will not urge this plea. I say guilty to both charges, with the exception, that I did not mean to bring contempt upon the Christian religion, as it is taught in the New Testament, — either by what I wrote or by what I said. But I did mean to bring contempt upon the priests and upon the Church, — for neither the one nor the other is of Christ, or possessed of the spirit of Christ. There is a wide difference, your worships, between priestcraft and Christianity; and when priests take upon them the functions of the divine ministry as a profession, and for mere pay, their whole lives giving the lie to the precepts which they teach, — I think, your worships, that they deserve contempt, derision, and execration.

"This good priest, my accuser, for example, your worships, whose conscience is so tender, and whose love for religion is so profound, that he cannot choose but violate all the fundamental injunctions of Christ in my person, by this public prosecution of me; this good priest, I say, your worships, is well known in Flamboro', not for his benevolence and charity to the poor; not for his love of their spiritual welfare; but for his enmity to whatsoever will advance their temporal interests; and if he cares nothing for their every-day life, — its burdens, calamities, and issues, — what can he care for their spiritual life? I speak, your worships, of what I know, and of what is commonly known and patent to all, — the bruit of which has gone through the wide country round, and is the theme of speech upon every hearthstone. And I this morning wrote the name of the Lord on his gate, to remind him of his service, and if possible to shame him into some shadow of an imitation of his Divine Master.

"And for this good office rendered to him, he vindicates his Master's name by running counter to his commands, and he takes me for his enemy. 'Forgive your enemies,' says the Christ. 'Persecute your enemies,' says the professed follower of Christ. Your worships! if I, or any man, in the ordinary concerns of life were to take oath of fealty to certain principles, and to their theories and practices of business, and if, in all my transactions done in their name, I were to pursue quite an opposite course contrary to my oath or contract, to the detriment of their honor and character, I ask you, gentlemen, by what name you, in speaking of me, would brand me? Would you not call me perjurer? and teach your children to avoid me, — as the Greeks theirs to avoid the drunken example of their Helots, — to avoid me, I say, as one accursed both of God and man?

"Can you wonder then, your worships, that I, knowing this priest's character, — my accuser, — should despise and hate him as a hypocrite, and a perjurer? or that I should seek to shame him, as I said, into a better life by forcing him to read his professed Master's name on his own door-post?

"But this is not all of which I am accused. I stand charged with uttering blasphemous words at a recent meeting in the village, at which my accuser was present. And if denunciation of the pride, selfishness, arrogance, and insolence which he there manifested be blasphemy, then, your worships, I am guilty of blasphemy, and am prepared to abide by the penalty. What could I do, your worships? what could any honest man do, in a case like this? A stranger to us, though an accredited person in this county, and one holding a high educational office, — seeing how the poor fishermen were daily cheated by the hucksters who bought their fish on the beach, — cheated because they could not calculate in figures the value of their cargoes, offered to establish an evening school to teach the men to write and count and read. The priest, my accuser, not only opposed him, and refused him the use of his school-room in which to hold a meeting for this purpose, — but took occasion to insult his parishioners by declaring them unfit to be taught; and he added, that education of the commonest sort demoralized the common people, and converted the men into heretics, and the women into something too dreadful for me to repeat before this Bench. And then, your worships, when the Methodist school-room was offered for the meeting, and whilst we were engaged in organizing our humble society for mutual instruction, this same priest, my accuser, in-

truded himself amongst us, disturbing the meeting by his presence, and repeating his anathemas against the education of poor people, and reiterating the demoralizing effects which would result to them from it.

"I confess, your worships, that I did speak some hard and bitter things that night against this man, and the false crew of pirates to which he belongs. And when a priest whose true vocation it is to raise and exalt his parishioners in all ways, intellectually, morally, religiously, and socially also, presents a hostile front to and against all this, I ask your worships, whether he may not tax human endurance and forbearance, not only beyond the point of safety to himself and his influence, but into open rebellion and defiance?

"What my words were, your worships, I do not know, nor do I care to have them repeated to me. But this I do know, that I will at any time indorse the spirit, if not the literal wording, of them.

"Your worships, I was educated in Calcutta by the Jesuits for a priest. I was too young and too ignorant to know what the Jesuits were when I entered their college; and I commenced my studies with a good will and a pure heart, resolved within me to be a true and faithful man before God to my calling. Four years elapsed, and to my horror, I found myself associated in the name of Jesus, not with gentlemen and Christians, but with political plotters, intriguers with women, liars, perjurers, and hypocrites. I cursed them, and left them. They kidnapped me and put me for two years in a dungeon, damp, horrible, and swarming with obscene reptiles; and when I escaped, I made a vow before my Maker that I would do all in my power to exterminate them from the face of the earth, and with them all sordid, selfish, and base priests, of what denomination soever they might be, whose wickedness was made known to me.

"This priest, my accuser, is the first priest I have met with since my return to England, and in him I can see all the vices of my Indian Jesuits. Him, therefore, I have denounced, and so I pray your worships to judge me."

The profoundest silence reigned in the court whilst Paul was delivering this remarkable speech. The parson hung down his head after the first sentence fell upon his ears, and he now looked as if he were annihilated. Even the stern old squire listened breathlessly to it, leaning forward on the crimson cushions of the bench, with one hand behind his ear as if he were fearful he should lose a word; whilst the Junior Magistrate sat silently, upright in his chair, listening evidently with painful interest. And when Paul had con-

cluded, a burst of applause rang through the court-house, and Polly's voice was heard in the midst of it: "Good lad, Paul! my own son, Paul! Thou 'se a reight 'un, Paul, thou is. I knowed thou 'd done note wrang, lad. Thou never did do note wrang." And then I saw Ben Olaff remonstrating with her, and trying to keep the poor old beer-woman quiet.

The magistrates retired for the purpose of holding a consultation upon Paul's case, and the parson rose to accompany them, but he was immediately checkmated by the Junior Magistrate, and had to resume his seat, amidst the jeers and laughter of the people.

In about a quarter of an hour the magistrates returned, when the squire addressed Paul as follows: —

"Young man, you 're charged with a very grave offence, ecod! and one that can't be looked over, mark you! You have spoken, according to your own confession, against the Church and the clergy, which is one of the deadly sins; and may God forgive you; for certain it is, that man can't, ecod! And you have profaned the name of our blessed Lord, by writing it on a gate-post, ecod! which is blasphemy! And it is the duty of the Bench, therefore, to commit you for trial at the next assizes, to be held at York. Ecod! my chap! I am sorry for thee, and those d—d Jesuits treated thee badly; and I hope thou 'lt always fight against 'um, and cry 'Down with the Pope,' ecod!"

Saying which the squire dropped into his chair.

"Will your worships allow me to ask," inquired Profanoake, "if bail will be taken for the prisoner?"

"Ecod! no, Mister!" said the squire, jumping to his feet. "Bail for an offence of blasphemy? Who ever heard of such a thing? Besides, who 's to bail him?"

"I will be bail in a five hundred pound bond for him myself, your worship?"

"You will, Mister! you will, ecod! Now what 's he to you, I should like to know?"

"He 's a brother of mine, your worship! and is in distress and difficulty. That is enough for me. I 've been tried for blasphemy myself, — so your worship will see that it 's in the breed."

"Whew! whew! ecod! A heretic are you? I thought so, ecod! I thought so from the first."

"Your worship thought right then, and I wish I was in the prisoner's place at this moment. I am the editor of the 'Reasoner,' your worship, — a journal devoted to 'Secularism,' and I have a

copy of the last number in my pocket which I beg to present to the excellent rector of Flamboro'." Here he handed the journal to the rector, and then, addressing him, he said, "You will find there, sir, a challenge to all such chivalrous gentlemen as you are, from Arthur Trevellyan, Esq.; brother of Sir Walter Trevellyan, Bart., and you will see that the challenge is to dare such gentleman as you to prosecute him for a far freer expression of opinion on religious matters than anything uttered by the prisoner. He is a very rich man, sir, is Arthur Trevellyan, and not poor like the man before us, — and you will find him a quarry worthy of your theological hawks; only I 'm afraid the quarry would be too much for the hawks." Then turning to the magistrates, he asked them again if they would take bail for Paul, and they again refused. Profanoake then left the court, and we shortly afterwards followed him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

INA'S WHITE AND RED ROSES.—BLUCHER, THE MIGHTY STALLION, AND TOON'S DROLLS WITH HIM.

ON our return to the house I found Profanoake's room-door wide open, and in a mirror which hung on the side wall I saw him in the act of drinking a beaker of cold water. So I advanced into the room.

"Well," said I, "what do you think of Bridlington justice, old fellow?"

"I think it beats that of Cheltenham, January," he replied. "But I don't believe the Grand Jury will find a true bill against him."

"You've a power of faith, considering you're an 'infidee,' Profanoake," said I, "and I consider you a fit subject to be converted to the Christian religion. If after the specimen of justice and intelligence which we have had to-day, you can put your trust in magistrates or juries, and believe that they will act justly and rationally, then your faith is strong enough to remove mountains by saying unto them, 'Be ye cast into the sea!' In the mean while, can anything be done for poor Paul?"

"Nothing, I fear, before his trial; although I will bring all the influence I possess and can command to bear upon his case."

"Would not the plea of insanity operate in his favor?"

"Undoubtedly, if we could prove him insane. But his speech this morning was not the utterance of a madman."

"And yet Paul is mad at times, Profanoake; as I can prove from personal experience."

"How so, January?"

"I will tell you," said I; and forthwith related what took place in the Methodist school-room, and in Bloody Beldin's cave under the sea, adding, however, that Paul was a great opium-eater.

"I think," he replied, "I can make use of these facts for the poor fellow's good. At all events I will try."

"Very well," I rejoined; "I will now go and answer my letters, after which I shall be at liberty, and we will then walk to the tents together."

Big Toon lit his pipe, and drank a pint of porter which I poured out for him. I sat down at the table, in my own room, to write; and whilst I was deep in a business letter, it suddenly struck me, in one of those mental freaks which are so difficult to account for, that I had promised Ina a gift of flowers for her hair the next time I went to Bridlington. So I as suddenly laid down my pen and said to Ishmael: —

"Brother, I want you to saddle and bridle Shank's pony, and ride him to the nurseryman's at the Quay, to fetch the flowers for Ina which I have promised her. Will you go?"

"Yes, Master Geordie, an' welcome."

"Wait a moment, then, till I write a note to the flower-man."

I ordered white and red roses half blown, with buds, and sprigs of jasmine flowers; and whilst Toon was gone on this errand I finished my letter-writing.

When he returned he brought with him a large wicker basket, covered with matting, and setting it down on the table, he said:

"I niver seed sich beauties as yon chap 's put inside this ere basket, Master Geordie, i' all my born days; an' I 've been a wonderin' as I cumed along how a lot o' dirty mould could iver grow 'em. It 's a queer thing, Master Geordie, this ere dirty mould; an' must hev some mighty dark secrets hid away somewheres i' th' airth, as we knows note about. 'Cause, you sees, it ain't purticulur abut growin' roses; but i' th' same bit o' garden ground, wi'in an inch or two o' one flower, it grows another as no more favors it than a white man favors Bendigo, the black prize-fighter! And then to think o' all the fruits, an' all the corn, an' cabbages, an' taturs that it grows, this same dirty lookin' mould, Master Geordie!" I 'se fair puzzled wi' it; an' can't for the life o' me tell how it 's done."

"It 's a very mysterious thing, big 'un," said I, "and I suppose, as Paul says of the stars, that it 's all alive, and has a great dumb soul in it which expresses itself in this floral and faunal beauty and abundance.. But as we shall never know anything about it, suppose we go down to the stable and look at my slashing madcap, my horse-devil, whose name is Blucher."

"Agreed, brother," said Toon; and so into the yard we went, accompanied by my friend Profanoake.

The moment we entered the stable, Big Toon started, and drew himself up to his full stature, like one surprised and amazed at a sudden and unexpected occurrence. He then approached nearer the horse, and made a more minute examination of him; whilst

Blucher trembled all through his limbs, whinnying with manifest pleasure, and evidently recognizing the huge tawny. At last he said, patting the noble animal:

"Where did you get this horse, Master Geordie? I thinks I knows some'uts about him an' his breedin's."

"I bought him in York, big 'un," quoth I, "two years ago last spring, of a livery-stable man, who could n't get his customers to ride him, or drive him, he had such tricks with him, and was such a devil to go."

"He 's the best horse, Master Geordie, I iver crossed. Many 's the long ride he and me 's had together, an' many 's the night as I 'se layed down aside him in the straw. I once rode him from Lunnon to Brummagen, one hundred and ten miles, in nine hours, takin' in the baitin's; and I 've trotted him more nor once seventeen mile wi'in the hour. You does n't meet wi' horseflesh like that ivery day, Master Geordie."

"Faith, no! big 'un, that 's a fact. But I 'd no idea that he had such speed as that in him; because I never put him to it, I suppose; but I have ridden him myself fourteen miles within the hour at a fair, round trot, and my friend here can tell you what he 's like in harness."

"He 's more like the devil flying on fire wings in some wild Walpurgis night, than anything else in the shape of a horse that I 've ever seen, January. I shall never forget how he flashed over those dark, cloudy moorlands, round the 'Isle of Skye,' and Billsey Jacks."

"He ain't forgot me, you see, Master Geordie," said Toon, as the horse arched his proud neck, and cast his bright eyes towards the tawny, pawing the while with his right foot, as if he were impatient to be caressed. "Shall I show you a droll, Master Geordie?" he added.

"Certainly, big 'un, let us see the droll." Whereupon he went up to Blucher, put his arms round his neck, fondling and talking to him as if he had been a blood tawny instead of a blood horse. He then took off the halter and squatted down in the straw. Blucher shook himself, then stretched forth his neck, and putting his nose close to big Toon's face, smelt him for a moment, rubbing his nostrils affectionately against his cheek, and finally ended his performance by dropping on his knees, and ensconcing himself beside him.

Ishmael then rose and flung himself over the horse's body, his feet in his flanks between the hind legs. He afterwards crawled between

his front legs, lying down on his back and talking queer Rommany speech to the "purty" animal. When he released himself, he bade the horse lie still, which he did, remaining motionless until he was ordered to rise."

"He 'll follow me anywheres, Master Geordie, old Zip will," said Toon; "an' I can rule his hackshuns wi' a word."

"I 've no doubt of it, Ishmael, from what I 've seen you do just now; and I confess it 's very extraordinary the power you have over him."

"Lord bless you, Master Geordie! I could do the same wi' any horse in less nor twenty minutes."

"You could, Ishmael! I wish you 'd teach me your secret."

"Perhaps I may, one day. Who knows?"

"Well, I shall remind you of it, you may depend upon that. It 's a grand thing to know how to master a savage and unruly horse."

"So it be, brother; an there 's few as knows how to do it. It 's a gypsy secret."

"How came you to possess 'old Zip,' as you call my horse, Ishmael?"

"I bote him i' Lincoln Fair, when he war as lean as a match, an' showed ivery rib and bone i' his carcass."

"Then you knew his breedings, Ishmael, or you would n't have ventured to buy him?"

"Yes, Master Geordie," he replied with a self-satisfied smile. "I knowed his breedin's, you may depend upon it. I gived fifteen pound for him in t' spring o' th' year, turned him to grass all summer, and next spring seld him for a hundred and seventy-five pound. What might you give for him?"

"Just the odd seventy-five, Ishmael."

"Muck cheap!" he exclaimed. "Why, he ain't seven year old yet, — ony risin' seven."

"At all events I 'm satisfied with him, — so tie him up, Ishmael, and after we have had some refreshment we will return home."

"Well, that 's all very wonderful," said Profanoake, as we entered the house. Your friend Ishmael 's a regular beast-tamer. I wish he could tame certain beasts that I know of, called by courtesy men, as well as he can tame horses."

At which I laughed, — and so an end, as Master Pepys says.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RETURN TO THE DIKE. — GOSSIP OVER THE CAMP-FIRE. — PRESENTATION OF THE WHITE AND RED ROSES. — GYPSY SONG, "THE LITTLE CHI SLEEPS IN THE STRAW." — LOVE SCENE BETWEEN MYRA AND GEORDIE.

WE set out for the Danes' Dike rather late in the afternoon, and were glad enough on our arrival to find the supper smoking in the pot, and just ready to be served up. So we took our places by the camp-fire, and in a few minutes all the colony had followed our example.

The youngsters were a little shy when they saw the stranger amongst them, but the menfolk were as merry as crickets; and Big Toon was particularly assiduous in his attentions to Master Geordie's friend. Ina also was more than usually talkative, and gave herself many little extempore airs which became her well. She had — to speak phrenologically — a good deal of self-esteem, and love of approbation in her nature, and she talked and laughed much, and was otherwise very demonstrative, on purpose, I have no doubt, to attract the stranger's notice.

Myra, on the contrary, was reserved and dignified in her manners, sitting a little out of the circle, and looking very beautiful and queenly. Our old granny had enough to do to mind the pot, and serve her tawny children, which she did with pleasure, and in true patriarchal style. Ikey sat opposite his cousin, who, for any notice he took of her, might as well have been absent; and I was glad to see that the wild young rip had strength of character enough to keep up the play so well and so long.

As soon as I saw that granny was more at leisure, — which was evidenced by the fact of her beginning to eat her own supper, — I said to her: "Granny! under favor of your small son, Ishmael, I have brought a friend to lodge with me to-night, and to partake of your hospitality in the eating line until he is minded to depart. Is it well, granny?"

"It is well, Master Geordie; an' what meks you ask the question,

when you knows as how anybody 's welcome as you brings to the tents, — an' 'ul hev the blessin' o' th' old Toon woman, her kith an' kin."

"Thank you, granny," said Profanoake, turning towards the ancient dame; "I 'm sure I shall enjoy myself very much in such good company, and amongst such pretty maidens as I see around me. I don't often smell the country air, and have never before sat at a camp-fire with any of your people, and I tell you that I like it amazingly. I wish I could afford to spend the rest of the summer months with you. I should pick up health both of mind and body, — which I much need, — and perhaps I should leave my pale cheeks behind me, and get a brace of new ones sun-tanned and rose-colored, so that my friends on my return would scarcely recognize me."

"And why not, Master?" asked granny. "Health 's afore wealth; an' if so be as you wants health, cum an' do as we does, and I 'll warrant you 'll find it."

"The life you lead would tempt me to sacrifice a good deal to share it with you," he replied; "but I 'm like an old mill-horse, granny. I 've got my work to do day by day, and, well or ill, I must do it."

"You 've queer ways wi' you, you chaps as lives i' towns," she answered; "an' I thinks to mysen sumtimes, thinks I, as we passes thruf t' big towns, an' sees folk a runnin' here an' there, wi' sich woful faces, as if they thote they shud n't be i' time to turn another copper ha'penny that day, — thinks I, what a pack o' fools these chaps be to mek sich a pother about a copper ha'penny. It ain't wuth whiles, Master. Why not tek it easy, as we does? It 'll all be one a hunderd year away. I 'se all for health, an' free livin' out o' doors; let who will tek t' copper ha'pennies for me. An' I 'ud advise you, Master, to look t' your health fust o' all. When that 's gone, it 's good by to a chap."

"My friend, you see, granny," said I, "can't do as you do, no more than you can do as he does. Every man living is in a rut, and can't get out of it. If he don't go ahead, he knows there are light traps and heavy wagons in abundance behind him, which will soon ride over him and crush his life out. And as it is n't a pleasant thing to be crushed to death in a rut, why the chap keeps jogging along just to let the passers-by know that his life 's his own. But, to change the subject, did n't you say just now, Profanoake, something about roses or rose color? I understood you so, and the word recalled to my mind a promise I made to a pretty gypsy girl not long ago. Do you remember what it was, Ina?"

"No, Master Geordie; I does n't remember no promises as you made to me."

"Then you must have thought very little of what I promised you, Ina, and cared less about it; and in that case, although I thought to make my promise good this evening, I can very well keep what I 've brought to myself; or find some other pretty she as will value them, if you don't."

"Don't talk, Master Geordie; how should I remember all you says, sin' you 're alus a sayin' sumthin' or anuther. An' if it 's a present you 'se brote me — which you seems to insineate it be — I does n't want no more presents, an' thank you, Master Geordie. The gouden gaudies is enough."

I was sure the gypsy girl was telling a fib all this while, and that she remembered well enough what I had promised her, and only forgot to remember it, and refused to receive the gift through fear of Ikey, and in hope of conciliating him.

"Very well, then, Ina," I replied; "I dare say Zetti and her sisters will be pleased to accept my presents if you don't care about them. What do you think about it, Ikey," said I, speaking to him over the camp-fire.

"What 's it all about, Master Geordie?" he asked, as if he had n't heard any of the conversation.

"About a promise I made to Ina, which she forgets; and which, although I 've brought what I said I would with me, she won't accept at my hands.

"It ain't worth thinkin' about at all, Master Geordie; and I 'd niver make a promise to any gal as iver lived agin, if I was you."

"But what shall I do with the pretty things I 've got in the basket, Ikey, since Ina won't have them?"

"Give 'um to sumbody as 'ul be thankful for 'um. What 's the good o' wastin' the purty fads on them as hes n't got no bowels o' gratitude and thankfulness?"

"Well, Ikey, that 's just what I 'm going to do. So, now, Zetti, bring the black-eyed sisters over the way to my house, and you shall see what the good fairy which always follows me has packed up in the wicker basket."

"Master Geordie," said Ina, coming up to me with big tear-drops in her eyes, and seizing my arm with both her hands; "I 'se a fool! an' I knows it. I 'se been a tellin' you note but lies all the time; an' if you was niver to speak to me again, nor pat my cheek, nor stroke the 'andsome hair which you admires so much no more, it

'ud sarve me right for bein' so unkind to the good brother who brote me the purty things, in the wicket basket."

"But what made you tell me those stories, Ina? Why did you say you did n't remember the promise, and did n't want the bushnie's gift?"

"Don't ask, Master Geordie. I 'se a fool, an' I knows it."

"Were you afraid Ikey would be jealous?"

"Afraid of Ikey?" she exclaimed, tossing her haughty head, "not I, indeed."

"Then what made you tell me those fibs?"

"I d' know. Seemed as if I must."

"But you had some reason for it, or you would n't have done it."

"Perhaps I had, and perhaps I had n't; I can't tell. I believe old Loke 's in me."

"And I believe you 're in love, Ina, and don't know how to manage your chap. Confess now, that you 're in love."

"No! I ain't a goin' to. I 'se teld lies enow for one night."

"And is n't what you 've just now said another lie, added to the night's sum total, Ina? Come, now, be honest with your brother. I love you, Ina, very much, indeed, and should be glad to see you happy. But you are wilful, and vain, and proud; and so long as you allow these things to rule your conduct, you never will be happy."

"O Master Geordie," she cried, the tears streaming all down her face, "I 'se very unhappy. Do tell me what I 'se to do, as you says you loves the poor gypsy gal."

"But how can I advise you, Ina, when I don't know what makes you unhappy?"

"You can guess, Master Geordie, can't you?" she asked, looking beseechingly into my eyes.

"I have guessed, sister, and you say that 's not the right scent; so I suppose your game lies farther off."

"But if it should n't, Master Geordie, and I did n't like to say so, could you tell a gal what she 's to do?"

"Then you do love Ikey?"

"I did n't say so. He does n't love me, I knows he does n't. He hes n't spoke to me for I does n't know how long; an' he treats me wurse nor a dog. What for shud I love him, then?"

"Well, Ina, if you 've any quarrel with the chap you love, my advice to you is to seek for a favorable opportunity and have an explanation with him. If you 've flouted him, and tossed your head at him, and given him unkind words, tell him you 're sorry for it,

'and won't do so no more.' And if he 's been unkind to you, tell him so; and I 'll warrant he 'll say he 's sorry also. And then you can make it all up, and he 'll love the beautiful chi all the more, and you 'll love him all the more."

"O thankee, Master Geordie," she exclaimed. "As I alus says, says I, — it 's jist like you, an' so it is, dear good Master Geordie; an' I 'll do as you say."

"Come, then, over to my house, dear little Ina! and you shall yet have the pretty gift I 've got in the wicker basket."

During this scene Myra was standing against her door, reading a book which I had lent her. And I now went up to her, hand in hand with the pretty maiden whose heart was relieved, I could see, of a heavy burden.

"Myra, darling," I said, "our little Ina remembers now what it was I promised her; and I 'm going to open the present-basket: will you come with us, dear one?"

"Yes, Geordie, dear," she replied, taking my outstretched hand in hers, and thrilling me with the old, unsought and unspeakable rapture; "I think I, also, remember," she added, "what your promise was; but I may be mistaken, although I hope I am not."

We found Profanoake sitting on one of the gnarled, knotted, and tortuous roots of the venerable beech-tree, leaning his back against its mighty trunk, talking away right merrily with Zetti and her sisters; and as the evening was mild and pleasant, we all sat down together, and told tales, and sung songs, and were very happy. Myra sung, or rather chanted one song, which was so simple and touching that I asked her to give me a copy of it, which she subsequently did, and I transcribe it here: —

"The little chi sleeps in the straw:
It is night, and the moon is up.
The grandam watches the sleeping chi:
Will she wake when the moon goes down?

"The fiery fever devours her;
She sleeps and feels it not.
Her dark hair lies on her white breast;
Surely she will not die.

"Her cheeks glow like the rose,
But it is the fiery fever that burns them;
Her lips lie apart like rubies;
She is fair, and must not die.

"The little chi sleeps in the straw;
It is morn and the sun has risen.
The lark sings his song in vain;
She sleeps, and hears him not.

"Will she never awake, the beautiful chi?
Behold it is burning noon!
She will never awake! It is night again, —
She is dead! and my heart is broken."

After we had sufficiently amused ourselves in this old-fashioned way, I gave the signal to Big Toon, who had been standing close to us all the time, smoking his pipe, and he brought me the wicker basket, which I opened at once, and displayed the treasures it contained.

"Now, Ina," said I, "come hither, and take your choice of all these beautiful roses and jasmines, except four or five particular ones, which I 'm now going to cover with my hat, and which are for somebody else. The only condition is, that you shall weave them into a wreath and wear them round your splendid head this evening, when we begin the dance that is to come."

So Ina chose a fine cluster of the glorious flowers, and wove them into a *tiara* and placed it upon her forehead, looking so lovely that my friend Profanoake, who is not usually demonstrative, could not help expressing his admiration of her in words which might have charmed the ears of a princess. Then Zetti and her sisters — three young and beautiful girls — decked their hair with the divine flowers, and sat like maids of honor in some fair court of Flora. And whilst my friend was engaged with this sweet company, I drew forth the choicest of all the flowers in the basket, which I had ordered especially for one alone.

"Dearest Myra," I said, "these, the best flowers which the florist had in his garden, are for you. It is right I should give you the best, because I love you the most. Here are two white and two red roses with buds just bursting into blossom, — set in their own green leaves, — with a sweet moss-rose between them, and sprigs of jasmine on each side to balance the posey. Keep this in your hand to-night, and when the pretty flowers are dead, preserve them, darling, for my sake, and when you look at them in future times, they will remind you how dearly I love you now and forever. Put a few white and red roses also in your hair to-night; and now kiss me, darling, as I kiss thee, my own sweet, sweet sister!"

The beautiful girl pressed me close to her heart, but did not speak a word. She sat down, however, by the brook-side, and having arranged her flowers in her hair, joined us under the beech-tree; and we closed the evening with a dance on the grass, Ikey playing the fiddle in the absence of merry old Hiram.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PROFANOAKE INSIDE THE TENTS. — TALK ABOUT THE OLD FLINTS AND THE OLD BRITONS.

"I'VE got the devil inside my tent, Profanoake," said I, as we prepared to turn in for the night. "I've often heard you say that his Infernal Majesty was a myth; but he's no myth, I assure you, as you shall shortly see."

"I should like it above all things, January," he replied. "I want to ask him a few questions which it concerns me to know; and I hope he'll be polite enough to answer them. What shape does he assume? That of a codfish gentleman, in the old satyr shape, including the cloven foot, long tail, horns, and fire-breathing nostrils."

"Neither the one nor the other," said I. "But let us walk in, and I will present him to you."

"Here he is!" I added, as the affectionate brute jumped upon my shoulder and licked my face. "How do you like him, Profanoake? Is your ideal of a devil anything like this?"

"Not a bit of it, January. He's too noble-looking an animal for a devil. Why do you call him by a name so obnoxious? Do you think old sooty will hold you guiltless?"

"I don't know his table of commandments, Profanoake, and really can't say whether he forbids his name to be taken in vain; nor do I care, because you see, I'm not likely to have any dealings with him, either here or hereafter. I call my dog, therefore, what I please; and as when he's at liberty, he goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, I think 'Devil' is a very appropriate name for him."

Profanoake said he thought so too; and was soon on good terms with him. We then wrapped ourselves up, each in a blanket, and lay down on the straw.

"I tell you what, January, this is quite a romantic adventure, and I think I have now seen the two extremes of English civilization,—London, and Big Toon's camp by the Danes' Dike. I think, too,

that I know where the greatest proportionate amount of happiness is to be found; although I've no doubt the old curse of Eden has found its way here, as well as there."

"No doubt, Profanoake, there's misery here if we could only get behind the scenes of every heart in the encampment. But, on the whole, I have never seen happier, better, or merrier people, and I've never been so happy myself as during my sojourn amongst them."

"They all seem to like you and treat you like a brother," he added; "and you seem to be quite as much at home here as if you were one of their tribe."

"Well, I am at home; and if I could, I would live with them altogether," I rejoined.

"What's the attraction, January? Have you fallen in love with any of the pretty gypsies?"

"A likely thing, indeed! I love the wild, free life they lead here, it suits my disposition; for I hate restraint, and like to be my own master, with as few responsibilities upon me as possible. What's the good, as Elliott says, of laboring like a slave for a coffin? which is about all a man can get inside a town, when he can live in his canvas house, anywhere he pleases, and kill his own food, enjoying the sport, and independent of all the world. Tennyson curls his upper lip in supreme disgust when he makes his Locksley Hall man say,

'I! to mate with savage women!'

as if it were something particularly damnable for the morbid chap to do; whereas I think it would have been the best thing he could have done. She would have knocked the bile out of him, and set his lyre to healthier music. I should n't mind mating with a savage woman, if I might have my choice; not a bit of it! Especially if I wanted to rear a brood of young savages. Give me a strong, sound, healthy woman, any way, to be the mother of my children. I would rather go childless to the grave than marry your drawing-room dolls! poor, puny, frail, consumptive lasses, who are only fit to loll on sofas, read novels, and die!"

"If by a savage, January, you mean nothing more terrible than one of the pretty gypsy girls who have charmed me so much this day, I could n't condemn your choice of a mate. I never saw such fine animals in my life. Zetti is pretty, Ina is handsome, and Myra is not only beautiful, but superb."

"Bravo! old fellow! Which is the attraction? Have you fallen

in love with one of the pretty gypsies?" I asked, giving him back his own question to me.

"Not exactly. But come let us go to sleep. I want to dream about them."

I laughed heartily at this conceit, and turning on my side, went over to the majority, or elsewhere.

When we arose next morning we found the camp-fire all ablaze, and Ikey and Ina sitting lovingly together stripping the feathers from a brace of pheasants which had been unlawfully shot out of season. I saw it at once by the light which shone in their eyes, and the pleasure which beamed from their faces, that they had made up their differences, and were happy once more. I took no notice of it, however, and whilst breakfast was preparing, Profanoake and I strolled over the fields towards Speighton in search of antiquities.

I had shown him, before we left the tent, three or four cards on which I had arrayed and fastened some of these curious relics, which I had gathered in previous rambles; and he was much interested in them. It seemed impossible, he said, that they should have survived after the lapse of eighteen hundred years. Yet there they were; and they seemed to bring us into actual contact with the aborigines of the island. An old flint hammer, an axe, a saw, an arrow-head, — these were the links connecting us with the every-day life of that remote people.

"Those ancient Britons," said I, "were a very remarkable race, and although they profess to have traditions of their immigration and settlement, yet there is no assigning any date to either. They are literally lost in the twilight of time, not only as to their settlement, but their previous history. They were an old civilized people long before Cæsar's conquest; and five hundred years before the birth of Christ the Phœnicians traded with them for tin. They also say that Greek merchants traded with them, and were so enraptured with the beauty and prodigal fruitfulness of the country that they called it the 'Land of Ceres.' They had a great educational institution called the 'Bardic Institution,' where the priests and bards were trained for the sacred office. Cæsar tells us, in his Commentaries, that a bard was twenty years in probation, before he was entitled to exercise the functions of his order. And it is remarkable that some of the physical sciences — astronomy, for example — were included in their curriculum. They taught also the theory and practice of medicine; moral philosophy, and a sort of metaphysical theosophy. Society was divided into free men and slaves, and the duties and

privileges of both were clearly defined by the Druidical law. Marriage was sacred amongst them; and trial by jury was the authorized mode of judgment. The Gauls sent their young men to be educated at the Bardic Institution; and for unknown centuries all the teaching was oral. I think it was about the ninth century of Christ that the trials and sacred sentences of the Holy Order were put into writing, from the lips of the bards then living; and if I remember rightly the volumes containing them are called the 'Myfrian Archæology.' Davis, in his 'Celtic Remains,' has also preserved some of them, and has entered very largely and learnedly into the history and exposition of the British Mythology.

"Vulgar people call these ancient Britons who made the flint implements we are in search of savages, being misled by Goldsmith and other popular historians. But savages do not found colleges for learning, and make wise laws, and teach great truths, and build astronomical temples like those of Stonehenge and Auberry."

"Very true," said Profanoake; "and yet the mass of the people must have been very little better than the serfs under the feudal barons. But what was the theosophical teaching of the priests? Did they not believe, like the Hindoos, in transmigration?"

"Yes, they taught this doctrine to the people; but I am sometimes inclined to think that this was the mere objective and symbolic form of that higher doctrine which we moderns call regeneration; and that this latter and inner meaning was taught only to the initiated. For they believed in future rewards and punishments, and that man must be made pure and spotless before he can transmigrate into the highest life; and that until he is thus pure, he must undergo continual earthly incarnations, and be doomed to new trials."

"A capital check, this doctrine, January, to all rogues, thieves, and vagabonds. I wish it were an article — sincerely believed — in the faith of Christendom; for Old Nick has lost all credit, and is bankrupt of his terrors."

"I remember," said I, "a Druidical sentence in which I discovered the profoundest spiritual insight, and an announcement of that supreme law of love which is the high-water mark of the human soul. It is this: —

"If during human life, or the state of probation, the soul attaches itself to good, it passes in the instant of death into a higher state of existence, where good necessarily prevails; for in all states of existence above humanity, good preponderates; and therein all beings are necessarily good; hence they can never fall, but are still advan-

cing higher and higher in the scale of happiness and perfection, till they arrive at their final destination, where every being in his allotted place will be completely happy to all eternity. Liberty, however, will still remain in the exercise of love and benevolence; for love is the principle which rules everything in those states of existence which are above humanity."

"A very remarkable sentence, January; and, whether one believes the doctrine or not, it proves that a culture obtained amongst this old, mysterious people for which neither historians nor the popular voice have given them credit."

"Here," said I, suddenly stopping and picking up a well-preserved arrow-head, — "here is one of the weapons of this people. Just examine it. See, here are the rude marks left by the instrument which fashioned it. Nothing can be plainer."

"No, January, it's plain enough. And I should like to bear this away as a trophy."

"Take it by all means. We have scarcely time to go farther and seek for more."

"Well, the dragon's teeth have not grown into armed men," he said; "but I can see armed men through the magic of this dragon's tooth, nevertheless. It annihilates twenty centuries for me, and brings me to them face to face."

"Then, after all, it is not a barren tooth. So put it in your pocket, and let us return. I've got a wolf inside me."

"I confess to hungry gnawings myself," he rejoined, "and shall be glad of my breakfast."

So we hurried back to the camp.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MYRA AND THE FLOWERS.—LETTER FROM "FLAMIN' NOSEY."—LAST INTERVIEW BETWEEN GEORDIE AND MYRA.—MYRA'S VISION.

I NOTICED as we sat at breakfast that Myra wore the flowers I gave her last night in her bosom; and that they were not faded. Her beautiful dark eyes met mine, and she knew I was pleased, and that I appreciated the graceful compliment.

"How are you, this morning, dearest?" said I. "I hope the dancing did you no harm."

"None at all, Geordie dear. I never slept a sounder or a sweeter sleep."

"I 'm glad of it; you had some sweet bedfellows," said I, pointing to the roses.

"No," she said; "but I was floated into the very highest heaven by thoughts which were far sweeter than roses."

"I wonder, dearest, that they did n't keep you in heaven. I suppose they thought the angels would be jealous of you," I replied.

"Fie! Master Geordie," said Ina, "talkin' that way about the blessed angelers. D' ye think they 're like us humans, a makin' o' theirsens glumpy all the time about a matter o' jellosee? Little you knows about the blessed angelers, if you thinks that how!"

"To hear how you talk, Ina, one would suppose they were particular friends of yours, and were accustomed to tell you all their secrets over a dish of tea. What do you know, now, about the 'blessed angelers'?"

"Look you, Ishmael!" cried granny, very inopportunely depriving me of the information I sought from Ina. "Here 's a chap cumin' across the green wi' a letter in his fist; an' I 'll be sworn it 's from my stray lad i' Lunnon. I dreamed last night he 'd cumed back and won his battle. An' who iver heerd tell of a dream not cumin' true?"

"Be this Ishmael Toon's campin' place, Maester?" asked the man as he came up to the fire.

"Yes," said Toon. "I 'm the chap, Mister. What do 'se want?"

"I 'se brote a letter for yer, fra Flambruff, Maester, — and there 's fourpence to pay on 't."

"That 's for yerself, Mister, is it?" said Toon.

"Yees it be. It 's a lang walk fra Flambruff, yer sees; an' t' letter war in a hurry. It says, 'Speed! an' Big Toon 'ul tip yer a forpenny bit.'"

"That 's Nosey, granny! by all the tarpaulins," said Toon, "an' you 'se right. Here, Mister, here 's the pay, an' thank you."

"Thou 'se a reight decent chap, lad; an' thank *thee!* Good mornin'!" Saying which he strode off as quickly as he came, and no more words passed.

Big Toon opened the letter and read aloud: —

"This cums to you all, hopin' you 're well as it leaves me at present. Dear old Granny, an' big Ishmael, an' my purty little chi as was so sick when I left, an' all on you: I writes these few lines to say as how I 'se won the Belt, and is Champinion, an' am as well as can be expected, considerin' the hammerin' I got, which it was no child's play I tells you. My smeller is knocked as flat as a pancake, an' a choppin' blow hes made a ugly gash i' my right jowl, an' two o' my ribs is smashed. The Blacksmith is a 'ticular hard hitter, and fote as game as a cock. It war sum sense to stan' afore him, an' I niver felt so happy while the fite lasted, i' my life. He 's got his gruel, tho'; which it ain't for me to talk about. The doctor chaps says I 'se none hurt, an' they 'll git me on my pins in no time; when I sall cum an' see you.

"Hit Master Geordie a clout on t' head for my sake. So no more at preasant from FLAMIN' NOSEY.

"*Take Notice.* They 'll hev to alter my name, and call me '*No Nose,*' or '*Pancake Snout,*' or summat or uther arter this, as the gristle 's clean squelshed."

There was great rejoicing over this good news from brother Nosey; and all the tawnies wished Hiram was back from Peterboro' Brig Fair, that they might celebrate the event with due honors. Big Toon was as proud as a peacock of his brother's prowess and position, and I never saw him so much excited before.

"What d' ye think of that, granny," said he. "Is n't you proud o' the granson wi' the big nose, old dame! It 's the fust time that a gypsy chap 's won the belt of the bushnies."

"I knowed it, Ishmael! I knowed it! Did n't I tell you that I

dreamed it wur so? An' who iver heerd of a dream not cumin' true?"

All the tawnies partook of the excitement, and the pretty maidens were as loud as the rest in their expressions of delight and pleasure. Even Myra was moved; and her eyes flashed with all the eloquence of enthusiastic pride, although she said nothing. Ina, however, could not hold her tongue:

"I 'se not surprisen the Flamin' Nosey 's won his battle, brother Ishmael," she said. "When did he iver lose a battle, I sud like to know? Ain't he licked ivery chap as cumed afore him iver sin' he 's been i' the ring? O, he 's a customer, is brother Nosey; an' bad to beat. What 'll the dirty potter chaps, an' the trulls as follers their carts, say to it, I 'se a wonderin'? Will they bespise the tawnies agin, as they passes their camp i' the lane? Come up! my fine fellers wi' the painted pots — an' the trulls i' the mucky gowns! Not you as will!"

"Won't we hev a shindy when Nosey cums back t' the tents!" said Ikey; "an' won't old Hiram fiddle, and Ina hammer the tamboreen, an' the feet o' the tawny gals fly over the grass! An' won't the rifle as cumed from t' Nottingham chap's winder go a walkin' i' the spinnies and over the purty fields, and say to the brown birds and pussy cats, 'No you don't!' as they tries to git away from him. An' I should n't wonder, Master Geordie," he added, looking my way, "but there 'ul be a sight o' Polly Dradda's beer drunken."

"Remember your promise, Ikey," said I; "You 're dedicated to cold water and snowballs; and no beer must wash your gullet at the festival."

"You is n't a goin' to drink no beer, is you, Ikey?"

"No, cousin Ina. I sha'n't drink no beer; tho' it 's a hard case."

"I see no hardship in it, Ikey," said I. "Can't you be merry without drinking beer?"

"Yes, Master Geordie, but not jolly, you sees. A chap can't git jolly on cold water an' snowballs. It 's agin natur."

"But what 's the good, Ikey," said Ina, "o' bein' jolly at night when you knows you 'ul be down i' the dumps in the mornin'? Is n't you a better chap, an' hes better health, an' 'andsomer looks, nor when you war alus drinkin' that unabidable beer? I sud think so, an' cum up! Master Ikey."

"I think so too," said I; "and now, Profanoake, if you 've finished your breakfast I 'll show you all the wonders of Flamboro' Head."

"So that we get back to Bridlington in time for me to answer my

letters," he said, "I shall be delighted to go," and with this understanding we walked down to the North Sea, and engaged Bill Gibbons to pull us to Speighton Crags, and round the Head, which he did, much to the delight and pleasure of my London friend.

On our return I sought Myra, and had a long talk with her, under the beech-tree. I had made up my mind to quit the camp that day, without any formal leave-taking; and without telling any one of my intention. I could not trust myself to bid my friends good by; and I could never have said "good by" to Myra. I hate leave-taking. If you have made up your mind to depart, it is better to mount your horse at once, and go, — better for all parties. It saves much inconvenience, and often much pain both to him who goes and to those who stay behind. Myra, however, instinctively knew that I was going to leave her, although I gave no sign to indicate it.

My tent was still standing, and I had packed up none of my things, nor did I intend to do so. I meant to leave them where, and as they were.

"Geordie, dear," she said, "a strange feeling has come over me to-day, and will not let me rest. Are you going away from us to-day?"

"Do not ask any questions, darling! Is not the time sufficient for its own evil? I *must* leave you, dear one, soon; and why not to-day as well as any time?"

"You are right, Geordie," she replied; "but oh! it is hard to bear."

"And do you think, go when I may, that I shall not feel the bitterest pangs in parting from *you*, dearest? Indeed, I shall, and would to God that I were never going to part from you."

"We shall never be parted, O my love!" she cried; "I know it well enough; we shall never be parted! Space and time may separate us, so that our arms shall fold each other no more, and our lips meet no more, and no sweet words of assuring and reassuring love shall drop down into our ears and hearts again, — but the soul, which knoweth neither time nor space nor circumstance, will hold fast to its own as mine to thine, and thine, dearest, to mine. But oh! I shall miss the folding arms, and passionate kisses, and the sweet words of love, Geordie; for I am indeed a woman, with a great surging heart which will be loved, or break."

"I will ever love you, dear one; but you know what is to come to pass with respect to me, — and that neither you nor I have the power to alter it."

"See!" she exclaimed, suddenly rising, her eyes fixed on the palpitating air, her fine figure erect, and her right hand pointing in the direction of the heath. "See! Geordie. She has come for you. She beckons you away, and she looks at me reproachfully as if I were wronging her. O, I have not wronged thee, dear, beautiful maiden! And I will not wrong thee. But you will let him come to me sometimes; will you not? You need not be jealous; for although he loves me well, he loves you more; and he will never cease to love us both. It is his destiny. You need not stay now; let me have him yet a little while to myself. He shall come to you soon, and then you will always have him, — and he will leave me more than desolate!"

I watched her with feelings akin to awe, whilst the vision lasted, and when she recovered, I drew her gently to my side and laid her head on my bosom, and kissed her to sleep. When she awoke she was quite calm, and never again alluded to our separation, but talked with animation upon casual topics, as if the previous part of our interview had been a forgotten dream.

Profanoake came up to tell me it was time to go, and to bid Myra farewell. And when she gave him her hand he exclaimed, "Upon my word, this is the prettiest little hand I've seen in flesh and blood. It beats that of the Venus de' Medici, although the sculptor had his own way with the marble, and I'm sure it's a true little hand, which will never be given away without the true heart goes with it."

"As you say, Profanoake," said I, "it is a pretty hand! Only to think that I never noticed it before. Let me examine it, darling," said I, taking at the same time a large diamond ring from my finger, and placing it on hers. "Wear this bauble, dearest," I added, "for my sake," and putting the dear hand to my lips I walked off to Bridlington with my friend.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GEORDIE LEAVES THE TENTS. — OLD YORK. — THE "WHITE SWAN." — TRAVELLER'S ROOM.

I FOUND by my letters which had arrived that morning, that I was required to attend a committee meeting on the affairs of the Union, to be held next day at noon in Leeds. So I ran down stairs into Profanoake's room and told him the news.

"Well," he replied, "I 'm sorry for it, January; "but as it can't be helped it must be endured. You 'll go by rail, I suppose, in the first morning train."

"No, I shall ride to York to-night; and from thence to Leeds in the morning. If I don't take my horse with me, or rather if he don't take me with him, I shall have to come back here again on purpose to fetch him; and I want to be in another part of the country."

"But you have n't taken leave of your gypsy friends, nor brought away your traps."

"I have no intention of doing either. I could n't take leave of them. I should play the fool if I did, and perhaps blubber like a great wench. I shall write to Myra, however, and explain the cause of my abrupt departure, — unless you will undertake this office for me."

"I will, with pleasure, January; but I think you should write as well."

"Never fear that, Profanoake; and you must give my love to all the tribe. You won't forget, now?"

"No, indeed, I shan't forget."

"Well, then I 'll go and pack up"; so I returned to my room and rang the bell.

"Is your husband at home, Mrs. Jones?"

"Yes, Mister George, he be."

"Then tell him to have my horse saddled and bridled, and at the door in half an hour. I 'm obliged to leave you this afternoon."

"Goin' away, Mister George! Marcy me! what 's up?"

"Business, Mrs. Jones; so please make out my bill, and let Jones take this trunk to the station when it 's packed and addressed, with instructions to send it off by the first train to Leeds."

"I 'll do it, Mister George; but I 'se sorry you 're a goin, varry. You 'll cum back agin I hopes."

"Can't say, Mrs. Jones," said I, taking off my coat, and commencing to stow away my things; seeing which she walked out of the room, mumbling lamentations, which, not being distinct and audible to me, I can't edify the reader by repeating.

When she came back with her bill, I was ready to be off; so shaking hands with my host and hostess, I ordered the horse forthwith.

"Good by, Profanoake," said I, as I entered his room; "and be sure you keep me informed of all matters that relate to Paul," which he promising to do, I mounted my horse and rode off.

I got into York before nine o'clock that evening, and put up at the "White Swan," Pavement, where I always stopped when my business led me to York. And as soon as I had seen my horse well groomed, fed, and bedded, I went into the "Commercial Room," and ordered tea.

The "White Swan" is a snug, genteel inn, and does credit to the York hostelry. It is a favorite house with "Commercial Gents," as they are called, and although there were not many in the room on my entrance, yet they came dropping in during the evening, and before ten o'clock there was a goodly company of them.

If a traveller likes high living, and is fond of giving orders and being well served and attended, let him always go straight to the commercial room when he arrives at his inn. No room in the house is half so well provided for, and no one gets anything like the attention which is paid to commercial men. The best staple products, and the finest delicacies of the season, are always put upon their table, and whatever else is wanted in the shape of porter, ale, or wine is brought in with magical alacrity. There is a set time for dinner, and no one is absent unless his business calls him. The usual and average price for dinner is two English shillings, — equal to half a dollar, — but so lavish is the provision that this sum does not near cover the cost of it, — and the landlord would be a heavy loser at the year's end if it were not for the large potations with which these rich viands are washed down. And it is understood as a rule of the table, that every man shall drink and pay his share of wine. The first comer, that is to say, the "gent" who has been staying longest

at the inn, is president of the table; and when he begins to feel dry himself he generally says, "Well, gentlemen, shall we order some wine?" and as the response is always in the affirmative, he again asks what wine would be preferred. Sherry is the common dinner drink; but it not unfrequently happens that champagne and claret are called for as well, especially if any of the men are a little "seedy" from the last night's debauch. A bottle, or more, of port wine comes on along with the cheese, and sundry other bottles make their appearance and disappearance after dinner. The bill is then called for, and the gross amount is divided by the number present, and each one pays his share.

You can have dinner, however, at any time you please, and you can have what you like for dinner, if it is to be bought in the market.

There is no stated time either for breakfast or tea. Each man gets up in the morning at what hour he pleases, orders his breakfast, and then goes to business. He gets his tea in the evening with the same irregularity; and from six to eight or nine o'clock, according as the post serves, he is occupied in writing letters to the firm he represents, or sending in the orders he has received during the day, and in balancing his cash account ready to pay his receipts into the bank on the morrow, to the credit of his employers.

At nine o'clock smoking is allowed in the room, and it is finable to smoke before that hour. Then the chairs are all wheeled round to the fire — if it is winter — and to the table if it is summer; cigars, pipes, tobacco, and grog are then brought in, and the rest of the night, until twelve o'clock, is spent in conversation, tales, songs, laughter, and merriment.

The "Boots" finally brings in the slippers for the party, — as they require them, — and each man, according to his inclination, lights his candle — which is always set in a brass candlestick, polished as bright as gold — and toddles off to bed.

One often meets with strange fellows in these commercial rooms. I don't know any place where character can be studied to greater advantage, or in greater variety. Each man is his own master, and is under no kind of restraint; hence he shows himself generally as he is; and it is amusing and instructive to watch their individual behaviors. You can tell a man who has been long on the road the moment he enters the room. He makes no noise, — gives a quiet order to the waiter as he takes off his hat, shawl, and gloves; he then doffs his coat, hangs it up, and is sure to take his handkerchief

out of his pocket, wherewith he blows his good old nose, as he advances up to the fire. This gives him a free and easy sort of manner, as if he said in words: "Bless your hearts, gentlemen, don't disturb yourselves, I 'm quite at home here, I assure you."

And, on the other hand, it is just as easy to detect a young fopling who is making his first journey. He is generally noisy, imperious, insolent, — giving himself all sorts of conceited airs, and drawling his words out as if it were a trouble for him to speak. He is dressed, too, in tip-top fashion, and looks as if he had just sprang out of a bandbox. He is scented with vulgar musk, or some other odor equally as plebeian and offensive. If he condescends to read the Times newspaper, he lolls back in an arm-chair, and plants his legs upon the table, or sofa, or on another chair; and whilst the real gentlemen of the road are talking around him, he casts a side-glance at them, and curls his lip in contempt at these "old fogies," as he calls them, thinking them an outrageous nuisance, and wondering at their impudence in daring to talk so loudly whilst a person of his rank and appearance is engaged in so serious an occupation.

He finds fault, too, with everything that is set before him, in order to show his importance; turning up his delicate nose at dishes which a nobleman would not disdain to partake of. He has doubtless been accustomed to better fare at home, although his father, perhaps, is a light porter, and his mother a washwoman. He is vain and conceited, and thinks himself equal in the quality and quantity of his brains to any of his brother bagmen; and he is as rude and ignorant as he is vain and conceited. Whatever conversation is going on over the pipe and grog, on whatever subject, no matter whether he is acquainted with it or not, he is sure to intrude his own small talk, and what he calls "my opinion"; nor is he capable of being "snubbed," either by silence or sarcasm, having a hide like leather, which these weapons cannot penetrate. I once heard one of these fine peacocks, who had been annoying the company all night, thus addressed by a sensible and clever man, with iron-gray hair, and an eye in his head penetrating enough to look clean through a seven-inch wall! "I see, young man, that you are new to the road, and not used to the company of gentlemen, nor acquainted with the dues and courtesies of a Commercial Room; and I think it would be more decorous in you to be less talkative and offensive in your manner; and not to persist in interrupting conversation which you do not understand. You will find this advice of service to you in your travels, and if you do me the honor to accept and act upon it, it will save

you from many a taunt, and prevent, perhaps, your becoming the butt of the company." And although the young man thus addressed stormed a good deal at first, and swore he would n't sit there to be insulted, and that he was as good as anybody else, and had a right to talk when he thought he would, yet he soon calmed down, and was silent for the rest of the night, which he cut as short as his pride would allow him, taking an early opportunity of retiring to bed.

Then there are spreeing gents, who make it a point to promenade the streets in the evening to look at the girls, never failing, when they think they dare to take the liberty, to address them by some endearing epithet; and ask them to "take a walk this evening." Puppies, who smoke cigars, and are invariably half drunk, and think themselves very fine fellows. If the theatre is open, they are sure to be there at half-price, making themselves obnoxious by their loud talk and indecent behavior; quizzing the ladies around them through glasses which, when not in use, dangle at a ribbon over their shirt fronts, and when in use, are stuck over the eye and held there by the pressure of the eyebrow and the facial muscles, — a feat which distorts their pretty faces considerably, puckering them into frowns and wrinkles, and making them grin so horribly, and yet so comically, that they would be sure to win the prize for ugliness in a match at any county fair, if they were to exhibit the same expression of face through a horse-collar. These "gents" usually return to the inn when all the respectable gentlemen are in bed; and they conclude the day's performance by drinking much grog, talking the divinest platitudes about the beauty of the women they have seen this evening, and boasting of their amours.

There is also another class of commercials, who are betting-men, and make up "Books" for the chief races; who are always ready to back the field, or lay against the field; to bet on a favorite horse, or to bet against him, — taking odds, or giving odds, — always careful, however, to see that their "Book" balances, or that they are on the winning side. These men are continually talking about horses, and racing, and betting, and have no other stock in trade for the commerce of speech. Then there are dog-fanciers, cock-fighters, and partisans of the ring amongst them; and it is rare to meet with a scholarly person, or one who is at all versed in the literature of his country.

And yet, on the whole, commercial men are good company, and conduct themselves like gentlemen; and neither bad nor coarse language, nor oaths, are tolerated amongst them. Their room is

their home for the time being, and, as a rule, the greatest decorum prevails in it.

I, at least, enjoyed myself very much that evening at York, although I came near making a trotting-match with a fast "gent," who bragged that he had the fastest trotting-horse on the road; and I should certainly have done so, if my Leeds business had been less pressing.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EARLY RISING. — TROTTING-MATCH BETWEEN GEORDIE'S BIG STALLION AND THE COMMERCIAL'S TIT, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

I AROSE next morning just as the grand old Cathedral clock was striking five, and, having breakfasted, I ordered my horse to the door; old Bob, the groom, who knew me well, and with whom I was a sort of favorite, seeing that I always gave him good words and good shillings when I came to York, tapped me on the shoulder, just as I was about to get into the saddle, and, with a comical smile on his face, asked me if I thought Blucher was in trotting trim that morning.

"What makes you ask?" said I.

"Because," said he, "there 's one of the commercial gents as is a going for to try him. He cumed to me in the corn-chamber last night, and axed me what time you was to be called up i' the mornin', — 'for,' says he, 'yon chap cracks so much about his horse, that I 'm resolved to be on the road before him, and trot my horse agin hissen. So,' says he, 'take this ere half-crown, Bob, an' you mind and call me up a hour afore him, and have my horse ready for me to start.' An' you see," sir, added Bob, "that he 's a waitin' for you on the road, and has gotten his horse in wind afore this time."

"Well, Bob," said I, "he 's a queer customer, and he shall have his whim. I've no fear of my gypsy, 'Zip,' and I think your fast commercial will return to York a little chapfallen, and down in the mouth. However, we shall see, Bob. Thank you for the information; and good day to you," said I, springing into the saddle, and walking my horse gently over the stony streets of the ancient and wonderful city.

I passed by more than a dozen churches before I reached the battlemented walls which surround the city; and once fairly on the road, I put "Zip," alias "Blucher," to a gentle trot for a mile, and gradually increased the pace for the next mile, until I saw that his limbs were at liberty, and his wind was good.

"Now, old fellow," said I, patting his proud neck, "we 'll just take it easy until we come up with this pretty gentleman, who thinks he 's got a horse that can match you at a round trot; and then you must show him your best paces, old fellow! Do you hear?"

Blucher snorted, and curved his neck, and struck out proudly with his fore feet, as if he knew what I said, and wanted to assure me that no bagman's horse would have a chance with him. So I rode on for about four miles, when I saw an ostler chap holding a smart, well-built horse by the bridle, against the door of a wayside inn. And it struck me at once that this was the horse my Blucher was to compete with, and that his master was taking his morning draught of ale inside. I took no notice, however, but rode gently on my way. I had not gone far when I heard the clatter of iron hoofs behind me, and my commercial friend of the night before was soon alongside me.

"Good morning, sir," said he; "you 're off by times this morning. I thought it was you, as you passed the inn just now; and if you have no objection, as I am also bo nd this road, we will ride in company."

"You do me much honor, sir," said I; "and it will give me pleasure to have so agreeable a companion."

"I think you said last night," he resumed, "that you were going to Leeds. It 's a pretty long ride, is n't it?"

"Not a very long one, when one has a good horse to carry him. I could go over the ground easily in three hours and a half."

"Not very easily I should think," he replied. "It 's forty odd miles to Leeds, is n't it?"

"I believe it is," said I.

"Well," he replied, "I may be mistaken, but I should n t think your horse, to look at his build, could trot twelve miles an hour for that distance."

"Perhaps not," said I, "appearances are often very deceitful; but he has done much greater feats than that in his lifetime, and may be called on to do them again, for aught I know."

"I think," he replied, "that my horse here would be a match for him. What do you say, sir, shall we try them?"

"I think not, sir," quoth I; "I rode a long journey yesternight, and have a good ride before me to day. I don't want to distress my horse."

"But a trot for a couple of miles won't hurt him, sir. Here 's a nice piece of road before us, and I should like the excitement."

"So should I; and any other time when I 'm not going a journey, if I should chance to meet you, I will give you a run."

"Nothing like the present, sir," he rejoined; "and, to tell you the truth, I think I can beat you."

"Thinking 's one thing, sir, and beating 's another," said I. "What 'ul you bet now that you can beat me?"

"I 'll bet you ten pounds," said he.

"Well, it 's not a very large sum," I replied, "and won't ruin either of us, let the chances go which way they will. But I 'll tell you what will be a better arrangement, I 'll trot you to the 'Red House,' which is about three miles off, and he who gets in first shall take both horses."

"Agreed!" he cried, and I saw a smile expressive of triumphant satisfaction upon his pretty face.

"Say when you 're ready then," I rejoined.

"Any time you like."

"Away then!" and off we went.

I held back for the first two miles, although Blucher appeared to be doing his best to my competitor, whom I allowed to keep ahead, and who frequently looked back to see how far I was behind him. I marked, too, that his horse was nearly at his full speed, and I felt sure I could distance him easily the moment I gave my own horse his head. So I gradually gained upon him as we were nearing the wining-post, and when at last I came up to him, I said: "Now, sir, do your best!" which he did, trotting out in fine style, and I had hard work to prevent Blucher from shooting ahead. At last as the inn came in sight, I loosened my rein, and, wishing my companion good morning, urged him on with a cry he knew well enough, and in a few moments my commercial friend was far behind. I had dismounted, and ordered a mouthful of oatmeal and warm water for my horse before he came up, which he did, by and by, in no very good humor, as the reader may suppose.

"I believe the Devil 's in that horse of yours," said he; "I never saw a horse trot at that pace before."

"I told you," I replied, "that he could go a decent pace, before we began the race."

"Yes, but who would have thought he could go at that pace? I believe he could trot sixteen miles within the hour."

"I believe so too, sir," said I; "although I never rode him at that pace. The gypsy man who sold him to Nelson, of York livery-stables, of whom I bought him, told me he had trotted him seventeen miles within the hour."

"Well, I 'm sold," said he, "at all events; and it can't be helped. But how the Devil am I to get back to York?"

"We 'll try and arrange that," said I. "What figure do you set on your horse?"

"I would n't have sold him this morning for fifty pounds," he replied.

"Well, then," said I, "pay me twenty-five pounds, and you shall ride back on your own horse. I won't take advantage of your ill luck."

"Come," he replied, "that 's Ionick, and I 'll pay you the money. So let us go into the house and drink a glass of beer over it."

After he had swallowed his beer, and expressed his astonishment that I did not follow his example, he counted out the money, and rode back to York a "wiser and a sadder man," I have no doubt; whilst I pursued my journey to Leeds.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LITTLE MERRY AND NO. 4 KING STREET, IN THE CLOTHING TOWN OF LEEDS. — BOLTON ABBEY. — THE STRID. — TRANSCENDENTALISM OF LEEDS. — THE BOY OF EGREMOND. — BARDEN TOWER.

I ARRIVED at the old clothing town about nine o'clock, and made direct for King Street, where my residence was. The old man-servant, whose name was Prince, answered the hall door-bell, and led my horse to the stable, whilst I entered the house, which was a private hotel, kept by a widow lady, whose family consisted of two daughters, one six and the other eighteen years of age. She was by no means handsome, although she was good-looking enough, and very agreeable and attentive. Her eldest daughter, however, was one of the sweetest, prettiest, and purest creatures I have ever met with. She was, like her mother, of a very fair complexion; with large, grayish-blue eyes; her hair, which was long and lustrous, was of a pure, pale amber color; and her cheeks were flushed with that fatal carmine tint which is the sure and certain sign of consumption. Poor girl! She was a great favorite in the house, which she made merry with her songs and music, and sunny with her beauty and winning, innocent ways. Her heart was always kind, and it melted, at the touch of sorrow, into a deep, affectionate sympathy. Her goodness, indeed, was proverbial, and it became common in the house to say, in speaking of an excellent person, "She is as good as little Merry." She died early in the spring of the year 18—, and was laid like a lily amongst the moss and violets in the Leeds cemetery. About a month before her death she came running into my room with a bunch of snowdrops in her hand, which she wished to present to me. "Are they not beautiful?" she said; and then, as if anticipating her own fate, she uttered these lines, which may perhaps have to go a-begging for their authorship: —

> "Offspring of a rude and blustering sire,
> Ye come into the world in death's attire,
> And die unseen upon the mountain path,
> As March treads o'er ye in his stormy wrath."

I thanked her for the snowdrops; but the gift and the lines moved me very deeply. She, however, was quite unconscious of the thoughts and forebodings which they had awoke within me, and was not only lively, but gay and blithesome in her conversation. At last, looking at me with her pure, innocent eyes, she said:

"I want to show you something which somebody has sent me, and which I got by this morning's post, — but I am afraid you will think me vain if I do."

"Indeed, Merry," I replied, "I shall not think you vain; therefore, if you please, let me see what you wish to show me."

So she took a manuscript from her bosom, and handed it to me to read. Here it is: —

"Our little Merry is a thing of light,
Flashing like sunshine through the old, dark rooms,
And making all things fair, and glad, and bright;
A laughing spirit in the cloistered glooms

"Of the old Abbey where she doth reside;
And all the solemn Monks who dwell therein
Look on her 'neath their cowls with loving pride,
This spotless maid! who never dreamed of sin,

"Nor had a thought she could not take to God,
And ask his blessing on it; — like a child
Who gathers May-flowers from the sunny sod,
And takes them to its mother, wet and wild.

"A simple maiden little Merry is,
And innocent and beautiful her face!
O'er which a smile, like music tranced in bliss
Amongst white lilies, spreads at times its grace.

"And then her laugh! — it has the ring of bells,
Beat from the silver wine-cups of the Fays!
And her sweet voice in heavenly music swells,
When, after vespers, the old harp she plays.

"Her eyes are blue as violets, and pure
As morning dewdrops glittering in the grass;
They symbol heaven, and stars, and all things sure.
And she doth never near my old eyes pass,

"Wrapped in the sunlight of her flowing hair,
Wrapped in the beauty of her spotless mind, —
But I bethink me of an angel fair,
And feel how scarred am I, how sinful, blind!"

"It is all true, Merry," said I, returning the manuscript, "although I think the lines have been hastily written, and would bear much polishing."

"I 'm not judge enough," she replied, "to decide about their merit; but I should be very ungrateful if I did n't like them. What puzzles me in the lines, however, is that I am called good. I did n't know that I was so very good. It seems to me that I 'm no better than anybody else."

"Well, Merry," I replied, "so long as you *are* good, it is just as well that you should be unconscious of it. What is natural and spontaneous is always befitting and beautiful, because it is the genuine expression of the soul. I don't like your over-conscious people; they are all diseased and pharisaical. Act out your own nature, little Merry, and you — and all such as you — are sure to be right."

"That is very encouraging," she replied, clapping her hands like a fairy, and tapping me on the cheek with her delicate white fingers, as she rose to depart. "I shall follow your advice, because it is so easy, you know, and because I cannot help it, — two very sufficient reasons, are they not?" she said, looking at me with an arch smile, as she bowed her adieu.

This was my last conversation with the beautiful, good girl; and in remembrance of it, and of her purity of mind and heart, I have caused a group of snowdrops to be carved in the marble stone which marks her grave.

. . . . .

At the appointed time I met my committee, when the affairs of the Union were discussed to the minutest detail. It was my business to deliver at least one lecture during the winter season to the members of one hundred and thirty-six Literary Societies and Mechanics' Institutes which constituted the Union; to speak at their public *soirées* and annual meetings when required to do so, and to consult with them in their council meetings as to the best means of increasing the members, and promoting the general efficiency of the societies. I had had an experience extending over eight years in the largest Peoples' College in the United Kingdom to qualify me for this work; and my object was to make all the institutes educational, — real schools for the working classes, instead of the mere reading-clubs which they, for the most part, then were; and in many instances I had been successful. These instances were now brought before the committee, and along with them the humble societies which I had founded in the villages around the Cathedral City of Ripon, and

that of York, and all along the Dales of Craven, from Skipton to Arncliffe. I then presented my proposed chart of work for the ensuing winter, which was accepted; and after a discussion and settlement of the important matters involved in the term "ways and means," the meeting was dissolved, and I returned to my Hotel, inviting the two secretaries to coffee with me in the evening.

They came in due course, and brought along with them a transcendentalist, who had found out that Leeds was a great poem, and that the divinest things were symbolized in the soot and smoke of factories and blast-furnaces. The chief secretary was a man of considerable intellect and high moral character, who possessed also great executive power, and to whose steady perseverance and exertions the Union was largely indebted. For many years he had discharged the onerous and important duties of his office without fee or reward; and he was so perfectly master of his work, that the committee, although it was composed of some of the chief men in the West Riding, without formally delegating, tacitly yielded to him the power and authority of a Dictator. He and I were well agreed upon the reforms necessary to be introduced into Mechanics' Institutes in order to make them efficient, and adapted to the wants and requirements of the working classes, and I never worked with any man with more pleasure and satisfaction than I worked with him during the whole period that I held the Lectureship.

"Well," said James, — that was his Christian name, by which I was accustomed to call him, — "how have you been getting on at Flamboro'? You were not very communicative in the letter you wrote me about your proceedings there; and I am curious to know what kind of a reception you met with."

"Not a very civil one," I replied, "from the parson; but a cordial one enough from the fishermen. Sixty of them have already paid their subscription for three months to enable them to employ a teacher to instruct them in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and they have further subscribed for the same period to the itinerating library. So you will have to send them a case of books forthwith."

"That 's good," said he; "but I should like to know what witchcraft you use to persuade the people to join these village societies."

"No witchcraft at all, James; I simply make myself one of them, and win their sympathies, because I 'm in earnest and want to do them good. And when by dint of visiting and talking, I think the time has come for work, I call a meeting, — often through the bell and mouth of his worship the crier of the parish, — and explain

fully my plans and proposals, inviting all present to take part in the proceedings, or to ask any questions which may suggest themselves. When the discussion is over I proceed to organize the society, and there 's an end of the business."

"I 'm glad you 've succeeded with these Flamboro' men," he said; "for it is just such persons as these that our itinerating machinery should reach. Poor chaps for whom no school exists, and who, otherwise, have no chance of improving themselves."

"Precisely," I rejoined; "and yet I do not rely much upon this Flamboro' experiment. The parson, bad as he is, is not without his influence; and being always on the spot, he may yet work ruin to the little society by spreading dissensions, quarrels, and jealousies amongst the members."

"Well, I hope not," said he, "although I 've known worse things than that done by parsons; who, however, are not all bad men, as your journal proves."

"I have met with many good parsons," I replied, "especially in the Dales of Craven, to whom I was introduced by my friend Birkbeck, (a descendant of the founder of Mechanics' Institutes,) who lives at Threapland House, near by Grassington, where the Duke of Devonshire has his best and richest lead-mines, and from which the immense block of ore that attracted so much attention at the Great Exhibition was taken. I have been all over these mines, and the men showed me the immense cavity which this block of ore once occupied."

"Is n't Threapland House situated near Rilstone?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied; "and Rilstone is classic ground. The scenery and tradition of Wordsworth's 'White Doe of Rilstone' are taken from this locality; and just over the ridge of the hills, on the right of the village coming from Skipton, are the magnificent woods and waters of Bolton, extending for nearly four miles, from Bolton Abbey to the old Barden Tower, once the seat of the proud Cliffords, and of that gentle Clifford known to fame as the 'Shepherd Lord.'"

"You have been to Bolton Abbey, I suppose?" he asked.

"O yes," I replied, "many a time, and always with fresh interest. I was most struck with the ruins of the choir, and the great eastern window. There is a strange correspondence between the religious feelings of men, and the solemn and stately architecture of the old Gothic temples. In the presence of these long aisles, ruined shafts, capitals, and arches, one's mind is insensibly impressed with awe and reverence. And standing amongst them on my first visit, I seemed

to grasp the secret which Rome exercised for nine hundred years over the devotional feelings of the English people. Music, painting, architecture, and the imposing ceremonies of the Church, were the æsthetic media which introduced them to the Christian Idea, and held them there with a magnetism as strong as the poles. The priests achieved their highest triumph by uniting the beautiful creations of art with the divine idea of religion. For art, in some form or other, is always the medium of the highest teaching, and there can be no grand national culture without it. Here, however, I stood amongst the ruins of that old worship. The Idea had survived its ancient investiture, had assumed a new form, and was waiting for still further transformations."

"I understand," he said, "that the Bolton woods are wonderfully beautiful, and that the Duke of Devonshire, who owns the whole Abbey estate, has caused great numbers of openings to be made through the trees, which reveal the finest and most picturesque scenery, and that seats and arbors are placed close to them all along the terraces."

"And that is the case," I replied. "The woods run on each side of a deep and narrow valley, through which the river Wharf now thunders and roars, as it tumbles headlong down the crags, and now sings sweet music as it glides peacefully along over the smooth shallows. The chief interest, indeed, which Bolton Abbey — apart from its traditions and history — has for visitors, is the beauty and grandeur of its woods and river scenery. You plunge at once, after leaving the ruins, into dark and solemn avenues where no ray of light can penetrate, and then suddenly emerge again into twilight aisles, where the sunshine pours through the dim window openings, reflecting the shadows of the leaves and branches upon the pathway like images of saints upon the slabs of some old religious temple. Now glimpses of the woody abyss below, with the rocks and roaring river are visible; now they are hidden by intervening trees whose tops rise up before you in huge, gigantic masses of foliage. If you wish to descend you must follow many winding paths, steep and even precipitous in some places, before you reach the valley. But go where you will amongst these woods, you are certain to be charmed and delighted."

"I have heard and read a good deal," said James, "about the *Strid.*' Did you visit it?"

"Yes; and I, also, had heard so much of it that it quite disappointed me; although the scenery around it is wild and romantic

enough. I had always imagined it to be a wide opening between lofty and savage rocks, with the river rushing through it. Instead of this, the rocks were not more than five or six feet above the bed of the river, and the leap which is called the 'Strid' is only about four feet wide. The waters rush, however, with terrific fury through this narrow gorge, and the rocks below are cut into sharp, deep shelves, by the force of their passage.

"Indeed, the whole valley hereabouts bears evidence of the ravages of the river. Vast slabs of rock lie all along its course, with deep cylindrical holes bored into them by the whirling fury of the currents. In some places the river is so smooth and shallow that you could walk over it; and in others it rushes down the steep and splintered crags into pits black and deep, dashing itself into white foamy cataracts, and hurrying with sullen roar along the abyss below, until it reaches a wider bed and becomes more calm and tranquil. High above the river on both sides hang the dark woods as they hung centuries ago, when the Boy of Egremond in attempting to cross the 'Strid' with his hounds, fell and perished in the stream. This tragedy which has survived so long in the traditions of the neighborhood was the cause of the founding of Bolton Abbey. The forester, who was with the young lord at the time of his misfortune, hastened back to Lady Alice at Skipton Castle, and with despair in his countenance intimated his misfortune by the significant inquiry, 'What is good for a bootless bean?' by which we may understand, 'What remains when prayer is unavailing?' The anxious mother understood but too well the meaning of the question, and replied, 'Endless sorrow!' And on being assured that such was her lot, she vowed that many a poor man's son should be her heir, and then became the foundress of Bolton."

"Was n't the original Abbey founded at Embsay, close to the Skipton Castle?" asked James.

"Yes," I replied; "but it was refounded in a beautiful valley at the entrance of the woods of Bolton, to commemorate the death of the Boy of Egremond. Both Wordsworth and Rogers have celebrated this catastrophe in verse. I like the lines of the latter poet best.

"Say, what remains when hope is fled?
She answered, 'Endless weeping!'
For in the herdsman's eye she read
Who in his shroud was sleeping.
At Embsay rung the matin-bell,
The stag was roused in Barden fell;

The mingled sounds were swelling, dying,
And down the Wharf a hern was flying;
When near the cabin in the wood,
In tartan clad, and forest green,
With hound in leash, and hawk in hood,
The boy of Egremond was seen.
Blithe was his song, a song of yore;
But where the rock is rent in two,
And the river rushes through,
His voice was heard no more.
'T was but a step! the gulf he passed!
But that step — it was his last!
As through the mist he winged his way,
(A cloud that hovers night and day,)
The hound hung back, and back he drew
The master and his merlin too.
That narrow place of noise and strife
Received their little all of life!
There now the matin-bell is rung!
The 'Miserere' duly sung;
And the holy men in cowl and hood
Are wandering up and down the wood.
But what avail they? Ruthless Lord!
Thou didst not shudder when the sword
Here on the young its fury spent,
The helpless and the innocent.
Sit now and answer groan for groan,
The child before thee is thine own.
And she who wildly wanders there,
The mother, in her long despair,
Shall oft remind thee, waking, sleeping,
Of those who by the Wharf were weeping;
Of those who would not be consoled
When red with blood the river rolled!"

"Well," said James, "that Bolton must be a beautiful spot, and I had made up my mind, long before you had finished your account of it, to go over there on the first opportunity."

"Don't forget to call at Threapland House, James," I replied, "when you're in the neighborhood. My friend Birkbeck will be sure to drive you over to Malham Cove and Gordale Scar; and you'll never forget those scenes, I can tell you."

"Well, gentlemen," said our transcendental friend, "the scenery which has been described to us is doubtless very beautiful, and very poetical; but, after all, the only facts which invest it with a human interest, are the ruined Abbey, and the death of the Boy of Egre-

mond. Now I find poetry and beauty in all the works and products of man; and prefer the town to the country for poetic inspiration. I know that to a mere bucolic mind, nothing could be more fatal to poetic feeling and thought than the soot and darkness in which Leeds, for example, is enveloped; and of the wonderful things which these typify it could make nothing. And yet," he added with enthusiasm, "I find a heavenly music in the blast and terror which issue from the scrannel chimney-pipes of the manufactory. In the flaming many-throated furnace I behold the clustering cherubim, — their swords inverted, and their immortal secrets burning visibly on their foreheads. I fancy I can read in these glorious triumphs of the soul the meaning of man's expulsion from Eden, and the significance of the beautiful allegory of Prometheus. For if knowledge have its penalties and sorrows, it can also steal fire from heaven to purge and regenerate the world. If machinery be a present demon, it is to the poetic eye of faith a future everlasting Saviour.

"Knowledge, however, must fulfil its own conditions, must work out its own experiments, until it restore the human race to the more refined glories of a second Paradise. In the mean while, man must suffer and toil, as aids to the invisible enginery which God employs in the scheme of human progress, millions of apparitions must figure for a moment, accomplish their mission of labor, and disappear! — drawn back again by the unseen revolving wheels, to make room for new generations. In so large a government there must needs be a great expenditure of life; yet every life has its own inestimable value. If it be absorbed as a fact to-day, it lives as a necessity to-morrow. It is woven with threads of fire into the undying fabric of the universal mind, and must remain henceforth bound up with the inevitable and the eternal.

"From this point of view," he continued, "I lose all sorrow for the condition of the mechanist and factory worker. The dingy smith, sweating with bare arms and naked breast, under the weight of his ponderous hammer, — as he hurls it with manly strength upon the seething iron, — the ruddy, roaring forge, with its flames and showering sparks, ascending in clouds of illuminated smoke to the black shadows of the smithy rafters, — are to my mind supernal splendors! The mighty smith! with Tubal Cain for his ancestor; for whom Nature had grown her forests in the great eternity of the world, before time was, or man; for whom she had torn them from their roots, and buried them until they blackened into an immeasurable corpse of coal; for whom she had hidden her magical iron, in

ore bowlders, at the bottom of immense seas; this mighty smith, I say, is not sorrowful, but godlike. The minister of civilization he preaches in steam-engines and railroads! Not even thou, O cunning Nature! couldst hide thy secrets from his eyes forever. Thy glorious Gospel, concealed so long in dumb stones, bursts forth at last, and thunders to heaven and earth in fire and smoke; in enchanted monsters which annihilate space and time, and with iron fingers weave garments for the naked backs of the world.

"When I walk along the streets, and thread the avenues of this vast city I am overpowered by its spiritual magnificence. God's everlasting sky floats over it like a prophetic dream. Through the dun and torrid atmosphere the pale, round sun glimmers like a ghost, that would gladly inhabit once more the abandoned earth; — earth abandoned to demons and genii, that haunt it with unnatural sights and sounds, and make out of dead metal living creatures, who do the work of men, without hands or feet, and whose soul is created by raging fire, and furious boiling vapors. And yet I know that these grimy demons shall one day be transformed into beneficent angels of light, who shall flood the world with beauty and with joy. In the roar of machinery, — in the rattling of the Arachne's spindles, and the clappers of the groaning mill, — in the bellowing of the fiery blast-furnace, — I hear the songs of happy children, and the shouts of a regenerated world.

"Shall I not, therefore, cry aloud from the house-tops, 'Glory to God for the blessed curse of labor!' Out of the sweat of human brows and the toil of human hands has not the uninhabited earth been filled with habitations? Has it not been conquered from the leopard and the lion, and made divine by the presence of human forms and the sorrows and triumphs of the human heart? In the savage wilderness, where the she-wolf howled over her whelps, wave golden seas of corn. Where the snake once flashed through the rank grass of the meadows sleep quiet hamlets, dropping with ripe fruit; and here in the pit of extinct waters beats the mighty heart of Leeds.

"Who can resolve the magic which hangs over this huge centre of life? that dwells within its life? Think what histories lie folded up in its rudest tools! What sorrow and bitterness of dumb hearts are secreted in its American cotton-bags! And that woollen material now weaving, destined to make breeches and gabardines, — think what a strange, eventful story these outer garments have yet to tell, as they pass, animated with human bodies, through the passionate strife of the busy world.

"To feed this great maw of Leeds all the ends of the earth have been brought together. It is not a mere consumer, however, but a reproducer. If the burning Carolinas yield their snowy crops to the accursed slave-culture of the African negro, and transport them over the wide Atlantic to this iron spider town, it is that they may be stamped by its genius, and transported afresh to all the zones of the earth. Ponder this curious, wondrous fact! — the life of Leeds animating the dead cotton-crops of America, saying to the pale blossoms: Be ye changed into the shapes of men! Arise! and go forth upon your ghostly pilgrimage! Wander till your doomsday come! when you shall be prisoned in judgment lumber-rooms, and taken out thence to be torn by the teeth of demons, and pounded into glutinous dissolution, from which ye shall rise again to the resurrection of a more glorious life, and become the sacred depositories of the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of man.'"

"Stop, O transcendental monologue! Stop, for the love of the Lord!" cried James; "have you taken leave of your senses, that you talk in this wild way? Did any man out of Bedlam discourse in that strain before! Send for a strait-waistcoat, January! for surely the good man is mad."

"Not mad, James, I think," quoth I; "but only a little cracked and considerably high flown. There is poetry in the town as well as in the country, — and our friend here ought to be instituted Poet Laureate of Leeds, forthwith."

"Thank you, sir," said he, laughing and enjoying the joke; "I 'm only sorry my rhapsody is so lame and shallow; but the truth is, that Mr. Secretary there is such a stern materialist, believing in nothing which is not fancy goods and commodity, — never looking below the surface of things, and missing, therefore, the poetic and spiritual significance of labor and of common human life, — that I thought I would let him behind the scenes, and reveal to him a new way of looking at these things."

"Well," said James, "you have succeeded admirably; and I shall be frightened to walk the Briggate and by-streets in future, either by night or day, for fear of meeting with some of your demons and genii. You 've fairly haunted the town, man! And I 'm not sure that it is n't a police case. I 'll think about it, and if possible I 'll get you put into the stocks. You can then make a transcendental rhapsody on the peculiar mental and bodily pleasure, the extraordinary curative virtue of being put into the stocks."

The Junior Secretary now took up the cudgels for the transcen-

dentalist, and asked James if he had ever heard of an outlandish barbarian, who lived all his lifetime in a lunatic asylum in Germany, by name Goethe; and how this madman once said, looking upon the smoky chimneys of a manufactory, that "it was the most poetic sight he had yet seen" — in his small world.

At this moment coffee was brought in, and pipes and tobacco, and some good Cabanas, — and we spent the rest of the evening gloriously, without further allusion to transcendental themes.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

PRINCE, AND THE WIDOW OF THE "PUBLIC." — LETTERS, AND LOVE-LINES FROM MYRA.

I SLEPT until a late hour on the following morning, when I was awoke by Prince, who came to open the shutters, — "drawer" up the blinds, as he said, and let the daylight into my room.

"And how are you, Prince?" said I, "and how have you been all the time I've been away? And how are the house and the people who dwell therein?"

"Middlin', sir," he replied; "we get on very well, sir. Doin' a good business, sir."

"I'm glad to hear it, Prince. Have you fed my horse, this morning, and groomed him well?"

"Yes, sir, two hour ago."

"And how does he look, Prince? Is he all right?"

"Right as the mail, sir. He's gotten flesh since you've been away, sir."

"He's had very little to do, Prince; that's the reason. I shall take it all off, I dare say, during the next month. Are you any nearer being married, Prince, than you were when I went on my travels?"

"Can't say that I am, sir. I'm afraid it's no go."

"Why no go, Prince? You don't mean to say that the widow of the '*Public*' is going to be such a fool as to refuse a handsome fellow like you!"

"I don't know about bein' handsome, sir; though I'm pretty good lookin', I dare say, for a man of my years; but you see, sir, I've got no money, and the widow wants a chap as has. It was ony t'other night as she said to me in the private bar: 'You see, Mr. Prince,' said she, 'I've nothing against you, who is a respectable character, and a decent lookin' man, and one as would make a good landlord to the "Plough and Harrow" public; but,' says she, 'one thing thou lackest, Prince, and that is the needful! If I was a silly young wench, and was going to marry for love, the case would be

different, you see; but I 'm too old, now, to care about love. I want a man as has got the needful, and can take care of the business. So I 'm afraid, Mr. Prince, that you and me can't make our bargainings.' I told her," added Prince, "that I could take a sight of work off her hands, and save her a deal of trouble, and in fact that she might get a worse mate nor me; but she only shook her widow's cap, and called out the more, 'One thing thou lackest, Prince!' At last I got angry, and went into the common room, where I called for, and drank, a pint of good beer, — cursing my stars that I was so unlucky as to lack the needful, and half minded to go and rob Dennison's bank that very night."

"Never mind, Prince! stick to her! Faint heart never won fair lady, — either with or without a widow's cap. And now bring me up a cup of coffee, and then go to the post-office for my letters."

The coffee was brought and drank, and by the time Prince had returned from the post-office I had taken my bath and was dressed.

Two letters, out of the heap which my letter-bag contained, immediately attracted me, and I seized them with avidity; I knew by the handwriting that one was from Profanoake and the other from Myra. I opened Profanoake's first, reserving Myra's, — like one who postpones a pleasure and its fruition, in order to double his enjoyment by brooding over it beforehand, — and I am sure I doubled mine.

Profanoake thus wrote me: —

"I walked over to the encampment yesterday morning, according to my promise, and was heartily welcomed by Big Toon, and your pet beauty, whom I found sitting together on the grass, close to old Granny's tent, — Toon smoking his little black pipe, and Myra reading to him Scott's Marmion, — a fact which, as I take it, would read very absurd if it were related as such in a novel, but which is nevertheless true, as you will not be surprised to hear. They inquired after you without much preamble; and when I told them that you had received letters the day before which made it necessary for you to return forthwith to Leeds; and that you had requested me to see, and explain to them the cause of your sudden departure, I think I never saw any human face change so suddenly into an expression of such utter desolation as Myra's did. I assure you I was very sorry to see it, although I could not presume to intrude my sympathy upon her. But I asked myself this question: 'What is the matter with the beautiful chi? And why does she turn so pale, and look so like the impersonation of despair, because Master January

has gone away to Leeds?' I had my guesses, I confess; and half reproached you in consequence of them; although, perhaps, I was quite wrong in both cases; and I know that, whatever the secret of it was, I had no right to interfere with it. Myra said not a word, however, but kept her fine eyes fixed upon the book she had been reading; neither was Big Toon very demonstrative; he merely said, 'We shall miss Master Geordie, if he stays long away, Mister; is he like to be long away, can you tell the gypsy people, Mister?' I replied, that I really did not know; because I was ignorant of the demands which your business might make upon you; 'but,' I added, 'he wishes Myra to take charge of his things, and his dog, until he returns; and he will write to Myra the first leisure moment he can command.' To which she replied, that she would do as you desired her; and after I had smoked a pipe with your 'tiny baby,' and stayed an hour, enjoying the sunshine and the fresh air, I bade them good morning, and returned to Bridlington.

"I wrote last night to Professor N——n stating Paul's case, and consulting him as to what steps should be taken in it. He is, as you know, very highly connected, and can command high official influence. I will write you again, as soon as anything definite is decided on."

When I had read this letter, I broke open Myra's. Then I lit my pipe, and sitting down in my easy-chair, — with all the epicureanism of a lover, — I read as follows: —

"It was not news to me, dearest Geordie, when your friend came to the camp this morning, and told us you were gone. I knew yesterday that you were going; for so it was revealed to me. But I did not suffer the less on that account when your friend confirmed the truth of my vision. It seemed as if my heart had suddenly broken and tumbled into ruins, when he spoke the words. For what is life to me now you are away? O, would that my time had come to go away also! Why were we doomed to meet, only that we might part? Is it not sad, dearest Geordie! this dreadful irreversible doom? yes, it is sad; and I know that it has brought you sorrow as well as me. Let us bear the burden, then, together; and for my part I will try to grow strong under it, and reproach not the fates. For it is all fatality. Nothing happens which was not foreordained, whether in nature or in human life; for there is no such thing as luck, or chance; inexorable fatality is everywhere, and rules all that exists. And yet I, knowing this, and fenced about with strong resolutions to bear my necessary ills, cannot help crying to you in

my desolation; cannot help wailing over my lost love which will never come back to me. O woman! woman! be thou quenched within me henceforth, forever! for the light of thy life is passed; and thy mission is ended.

"Yet I shall keep the rose-buds, dearest Geordie, which are even now dead, and shall wear them close to my own dead heart. And the ring which you gave me shall never leave my hand, in life or death. And morning and night I will pray to the Great Name for you; and though absent from you, I shall be with you always:

'O my love!
My own heart's love! The pulse of all my life,
In whom I have my being and do move,
And whose I am, through pain and wrong and strife, —

'Through good and ill, through insult, scorn, and hate;
Through life and death, and the eternal hours,
Which stand before God's throne, and on him wait.'

. . . . .

"MYRA."

"Poor Myra!" said I to myself, when I had read this consistently inconsistent letter. "I am truly pained and deeply sorrowful on your account, and almost wish, with you, that we had never met." But what could I do, dear reader? Was not I also suffering, doubly suffering, — for her and for myself? If any one thinks that I felt no pangs at parting with her; that I did not love her profoundly, and in the full flood and rush of my passionate feelings desire above all things never to part from her, he is indeed deceived. *She* was not deceived, however; she knew how much I loved her; but she also knew that it was a fatally hopeless love on both sides, although loving each other as we did, it was natural and inevitable that our love should find expression in words, and oftentimes in rapturous endearments. But, alas! this only made our parting more terrible; for I still looked upon her as my own Myra, and, stranger than all, I could not dispossess myself of the idea that she would yet, in some inscrutable, mysterious way be mine, and that she and Violet were one. This, of course, was hallucination; but it was real to me; and under the influence of it I wrote her a long and affectionate letter, requesting her to keep me advised of her whereabouts, in case her people struck their tents before I could again visit her and them.

CHAPTER XL.

MYSTERIOUS VOICES FROM DREAM-LAND.

I SPENT the whole of that day in my room, reading, lounging on sofas, and smoking. My front windows looked into the fine grounds and flower-gardens of the Infirmary, and one of my side windows into a square fenced with tall trees, which enclosed a green lawn, decorated with shrubs and plants, and intersected by gravel walks. I kept the windows open all day, luxuriating in this new life and its surroundings, which contrasted so strangely with my previous tent-life. And in the evening, during the long twilight, I drew my chair close to the window-sill, — on which a box of musk and mignonette was placed, — and, lighting a Cabana, sat there, looking into the square and listening to the winds in the tree-tops, musing the while upon many things: wondering what they were all doing at the encampment; whether Myra's thoughts were directed Leeds-ward; how Ikey and Ina were getting on; whether Nosey, and Hiram, and Tim the grinder had returned; and what chance there might be of Big Toon and his pals going a poaching to-night. Then I reviewed poor Paul's history, and ground my teeth over his present unjust imprisonment, and wondered if Profanoake would be able to secure interest enough to get him liberated before the Assizes, or whether the Grand Jury would find a true bill against him. And before I was aware that it was night, the moon had risen, and the great company of stars had mustered solemnly and silently in the azure fields of immensity, each in his ancient place, and all were marching upwards and onwards grandly, and without haste, to the muffled music of the Universe. Then I thought of Violet, whose beauty both of mind and person were spiritually related to all this grandeur and poetry of the heavens, — of my love for her, and her pure confiding love for and trust in me. And I said within myself, "Can it be that this chaste, innocent, and beautiful, this noble and high-minded maiden, loves me?" And a maiden's voice, apparently from the trees just under my window, replied: "O George, you know that I love you. Why do you ask me so cruel a question?"

I was staggered for a moment, and began to rub my eyes to assure myself that I was not asleep; and that the voice was real. Then I listened for more words, and still sweeter assurances, half persuading myself that it was indeed Violet who spoke, and that the mystery which had hitherto followed us, and would follow us to the end, had enabled her spirit, through the magnetism of our relationship, to know my very thoughts, and reply to them, in what seemed to me audible responses. And as I listened I heard, or thought I heard, sobs mingled with kisses, and soft endearing whispers.

"The Devil!" said I, half aloud, beginning to suspect that my previous fancies had led me quite astray; "this is clearly a lover's meeting, if I have heard aright, — but not one in which I am at all concerned. What a fool I was to cheat myself into the vagary that it was Violet who said those pretty words!" But then I heard my own Christian name distinctly pronounced. How was that? Well, perhaps, there were more Georges than one in Leeds, so that was accounted for, and I again listened. This time there could be no mistake; for the same voice, as if in reply to some question I did not hear, said: —

"Do not ask me, dearest, to do that; I cannot do it. Poor papa has no one to take care of him but me; and I cannot leave him."

"Then you do not love me, Blanche," replied the fretful lover.

"Have I not given you proof enough of my love?" she answered, weeping bitterly. "Why distress me, then, with these unkind reproaches? I would do anything for you, George, but forsake my dear papa, and this I cannot do. It would break his heart."

"Not it, indeed, Blanche; he would soon get over it; and then, you know, he could come and live with us, if you liked, when we were married."

"No, no! he would not do it; I know him too well. He would never forgive me, and you know, dearest, how opposed he is to our union."

"Yes, the old fellow is in his dotage, I know. A sane man would hardly refuse his daughter to one of my riches and expectations, I think; and therefore, dear Blanche, if you wish to make me happy, consent now, pray do, to a runaway match."

"O George! George! you are cruel; you are, indeed. Why speak so of my dear, dear papa? and urge me to do what would make both him and me wretched for life?"

"Well," said he, "let us take a turn under the trees and reason together about it. You say that we —"

And I heard no more, because of their sudden retreat.

I would have given something to have caught a glimpse of that good little girl, and most truly affectionate daughter; and I should like also to have seen her selfish, vulgar lover; but the trees hid them as securely as if they had been in the Garden of Eden. I felt sure, however, that the maiden was not seducible, even by love, which is the strongest of all seducers; and that she would hold fast to her integrity and her paternal duty; and I slept all the better for this conviction.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE COMMERCIAL AND THE "PIG."—THE GRUFF OLD FELLOW.

THE next morning's post brought me a letter from Violet, containing words sweeter than violets, and giving me a pressing invitation to Edwinstowe, adding that a maternal uncle — a bluff, old Indian colonel, who was a great lover of field-sports — was staying at her house, and that she was sure we should like each other. "I have already told him," she said, "the service you rendered me off Robin Lithe's cave, and he desires me to say that, 'by the teeth,' (his usual and favorite oath, — for the good man swears, you see,) he shall be glad to see you, and hopes you will come soon, and have many a good day's flyfishing with him. For although the streams hereabout belong to the Duke of Portland, Uncle Joe, who is acquainted with the Duke's son, has obtained leave to fish any waters on the estate."

This welcome letter put me into high spirits, and I determined to set out at once for Worksop, in Nottinghamshire, where I proposed to sleep that night, and ride gently over the forest next morning to Edwinstowe, a distance of not more than ten or a dozen miles.

Prince, who was accustomed to my rapid movements, soon brought Blucher, alias Zip, to the hall-door, and in half an hour I was trotting at a smart pace on the high road to my destination, and had left Leeds and its transcendental smoke half a dozen miles behind me.

When I arrived at Worksop, I put up at the George Inn, messing, according to my custom, in the Commercial Room. I found the gents engaged, according to *their* custom, in discussing cigars and grog, and before I could see distinctly through the fog-Babylon of smoke, my fast man whose horse I had won three days ago, jumped up from his chair, and laying hold of my hand shook it heartily, exclaiming with a loud voice: "Not a word about the pig! Jonnick! d'ye hear, sir?"

"O yes!" said I, "I hear, and will not say a word about the pig."

"Come then, sir, sit down," he replied; "and say what you will drink," and with that he rang the bell.

"A pot of coffee, and half a dozen cigars, Tom," said I, as the waiter entered the room.

"O, ay!" said my friend; "I had forgotten your taste. You don't drink, as I have occasion to remember, from a circumstance which happened when we settled about the pig."

"Well, you must confess," said I, "that no pig was ever cut up quicker or cleaner than the pig you speak of."

"That's a fact," he replied; "although I would have bet my life you could n't have done it so neatly, before you tried and won the wager."

"Which you paid," I rejoined, "like a gentleman, and without dispute or whining."

"O, may the Devil take me if there could be any dispute about it!" he answered; "and as for whining, there is n't such a word in my dictionary."

"Will you be so good as enlighten the company," said an old aristocratic-looking gentleman, who sat opposite to me, "upon this matter of the pig. You seem to have made a very curious wager between you."

"Very curious indeed, sir," said my friend. "I bet this gentleman, you see, sir, that he could n't cut up a certain pig which I brought with me in a poke, in a certain manner and a certain time; and as it proved, sir, I made a very foolish wager."

"You lost, I suppose."

"Yes, sir, I lost, and though it is n't pleasant to lose, and is particularly unpleasant to pay when you have lost, still I paid and did n't grudge the money."

"Well, I declare," said the aristocratic-looking bagman, "who 'd have thought it? The person does n't look like a butcher; is that your trade, sir? [to me.] Because, if it is, this is n't the place for a shambles meat-man."

I looked, for a moment, with a contemptuous smile upon this hoary and impudent old man, without deigning to reply. My friend, however, was not so lenient.

"I 'll tell you what, old cock!" said he, "you 're coming it rather strong, and if I had happened to be president, you would have to eat those words of yours, and pay such a fine as the company might determine on, or in default, be turned out of the room."

"That 's right," cried a gent across the table.

"I never heard any man insulted so in a Commercial Room before," said another.

"The old gentleman ought to ask pardon, and pay for a dozen of wine," said a third; and as the clamor was getting general, the president rose from his seat, and, calling for order, said: —

"I 'm sorry, gentlemen, that any one who belongs to our fraternity should so far forget what is due to himself and us as deliberately and wantonly to insult any gentleman who is present with us. For so long as a man conducts himself properly, we have no right to ask him, in any dictatorial spirit, nor at all, indeed, what his business is; and least of all to speak offensive words to him. Now, gentlemen, you have heard what has just transpired, and, for the credit and honor of the brethren, I hope you will at once express your opinions upon it, and instruct me what you wish me to do in your name."

"Upon my word, sir!" said the aristocratic-looking gent; "this is very fine. What have I done, I should like to know, more than you, sir, if you understood your duty as president, should have done? Here are two persons talking about a pig; and one bets the other that he can't cut it up so and so. Well, sir, he who accepts the wager does cut it up so and so, and wins. What 's the conclusion? wille, nille! that the person who wins is a butcher. And I say, sir, that this room is for gentlemen, and not butchers, and I won't sit with butchers, d—d if I do. So, sir, and gentlemen, do as you please. Who are you, more than me, I should like to know?" And the angry old man drank off his grog in high dudgeon.

During this speech several of the commercials were talking together in an undertone; and presently the president, without replying to the aristocrat, said:

"Well, gentlemen, what is your opinion about this matter?"

To which one of them replied, that they were all agreed as to the unprovoked wantonness of the insult, and they thought that the aristocratic gentleman should be requested to beg pardon, and pay for half a dozen of wine, to remind him in future that the laws and courtesies of a Commercial Room cannot be broken with impunity."

"You hear, sir," said the president, "what the gentlemen have decided, and it only remains for me to ask you to comply with their judgment."

"Then I tell you and them," cried the irascible old man, "that I 'll see you all at the Devil first!" With that he rang the bell violently, and Tom entered.

"Here, you Tom!" said the old chap, "show me into a private room, and mind you, Tom, that you let none of these d—d bagmen come near it; they're so infernally impertinent."

Thus delivering himself, he walked in lordly style out of the room, followed by the jeers and laughter of the company.

We spent a pleasant evening after that, and most of us went to bed at a late hour of the night.

CHAPTER XLII.

SHERWOOD FOREST AND ROBIN HOOD.

I HAD a beautiful ride the next morning through the "Dukeries," as the forest is called, because it is owned by noblemen, all the way from Worksop to Mansfield, namely, by the Dukes of Newcastle and Portland, and by Lords Manvers and Scarboro. I passed the Duke of Newcastle's splendid mansion at Clumber, on the left, and admired the fine sheet of water which spreads itself westward, to almost lake-like dimensions. The trees in the immediate neighborhood, however, are not of long growth, and give the traveller no idea of the original forest, as it still exists farther on. Here and there was an old and venerable oak, but they were few and far between. The road was good, most of the way being a carriage road, for traffic and conveyance to and from the house, to the turnpike; and trees were planted on each side of it for two and three miles together; the tree-tops mingling their branches and forming an arched roof through which the sunlight could scarcely enter. At intervals I had to dismount and open gates, coming suddenly upon broad, grassy ridings, and then upon sandy, deeply-rutted openings, or forest lanes, surrounded by gorse-bushes and wild heather.

At last I came to the high road between Worksop and Newark, which divides the estates of the Duke of Newcastle from those of the other noblemen I have mentioned. Just beyond the village of Ollerton you get a glimpse of the real character of ancient Sherwood, from the gray, gnarled, and knotted oaks which guard it on each side.

But it would be impossible to conceive from this slight view how strange, wild, and wonderful are the revelations of beauty and sublimity which unfold themselves in the primeval sanctuary of the forest itself. Hundreds of travellers pass that way without ever suspecting that they are on the borders of an enchanted world. And yet the walk of a quarter of a mile from that well-paved, macadamized road, will conduct you to an old realm of trees, with huge, barkless trunks, and twisted branches, which look like the giant skeletons

of an extinct creation. There is a solitude around them, likewise, which fills the heart with new, startling, and painful emotions. This part of the forest is called Bilhaugh, and stretches eastward away for two or three miles.

The trees are all oaks, — some of them eighty feet in height, — bare and black, scarred by the storm, and riven by the lightning. Many of them are split in twain from the top to the bottom; and yet so strong is the old life within them that their branches are covered with foliage. Imagine these old forest patriarchs, alive with God ten hundred years ago, putting on new garments of green every spring to hide the nakedness of age, and daily dying a death which it will take ages yet to consummate.

It is the most affecting sight which a man can behold, to witness these huge, dumb creatures, — so silent, and yet so desolate.

Few persons, unaccustomed to observe Nature in her ancient hiding-places, would credit the singular transformations which the oaks of Bilhaugh have, in many instances, undergone. It would be quite possible to make a new heraldry from the strange emblematic devices which have been carved upon them by the invisible fingers of the elements. Dragons, crocodiles' heads, serpents, glaring basilisks, Kraken, and monsters of an unknown birth, surmount the capitals of the old trees, or grin under their barkless ribs. You are literally shut out, in this part of the forest, from all signs of civilization, and seem to stand in a strange, solemn, and old universe. Over you hang the vaults of immensity; and under your feet how many worlds lie buried!

> "Stars silent above us,
> Graves under us silent."

The decayed ferns in some places form a soil which is yards in depth, and the surface is covered with mosses in beautiful variety, and studded with blue-bells, violets, foxgloves, and other sweet wild-flowers, in their appointed seasons. In the spring, whilst the ferns lie dead and yellow around you, and the oaks are blanched and leafless, the solitude is broken by rooks and jackdaws building their nests in the hollow sockets of the trees, and waving their dusky pennons to the music of their own cawing. Or if some tiny bird flits through the colossal ruins of the forest, it is only to utter mournful threnes, or sad, melancholy pipings.

The rooks and daws are the only winged creatures — save the night owls — which have any claim of habitancy in this old, primeval temple. But as the warm days come on, and May returns to

earth, like a bride laden with flowers, there is an universal joyousness in the old forest; the mighty oaks with centuries in their blood, leap up as into life eternal, and clap their ancient hands with a great shout of deliverance and praise. The gorse, dropping with gold, and delicious odors, flourishes under the wide foliage of the trees; the fiery adders come from their winter holes and sun themselves in the glades, and the whole forest resounds with the melody of birds.

At night, when the shadows cast by the moon enhance the solemnity of the scene, and fill it with ghostly witcheries and wonderful enchantments, you may hear the love-lorn song of the nightingale rushing through the starry air from the far-off dells of Birkland, and dying away in sweet cadences as they are borne along from echo to echo. The hares and rabbits then come out of the dingles, and thick, entangled underwood to crop the dewy herbage, and gambol in the silence and security of the hour; and as you walk along, the startled pheasant rushes to the tree-tops with heavy wing and shrill cries.

Washington Irving, William Howitt, and numberless other men, known and unknown to fame, have spent many days in this venerable wilderness, which extends even now in most of its olden features, eight or ten miles in length by two or three in breadth.

There is no question that Sherwood is a part of the aboriginal forests of the island. Its antiquity may be gathered from the fact that there are still the remains of Roman roads, villas, and encampments in various parts of it. Long, therefore, before the organization of the Saxon Heptarchy the trees of Sherwood were in the full vigor of youth and glory. And the old kings of Mercia hunted the wolf and the wild-boar in its shaggy dens and brakes. In the time of William the Conqueror, various Norman barons held it under the tenure of service to the crown; and many cruel forest laws — out of which the English modern game-laws grew — were enacted to preserve the red deer from the ravages of the conquered Saxon peasantry. He who kills a buck shall have his eyes put out; he who kills a doe shall be hanged. These are specimens of those feudal laws.

In the time of King John, the Hays of Birkland — of which I shall speak more particularly by and by — and the woods of Bilhaugh were the scenes of many royal hunting excursions; for John loved the chase quite as much as he hated liberty, and was a frequent guest at the old Castle of Clipstone, which then stood proudly on a hill about a mile and a half from Edwinstowe. Now, however,

even the name of the owner is forgotten, and nothing but a heap of ruins is left to indicate the site of that feudal hold. A few pretty cottages with neat gardens, occupied by the retainers of the late Duke of Portland, lie scattered at the foot of the hill, and constitute the village of Clipstone. The scenery all around is very romantic and beautiful, and one of the best trout-streams in England meanders through it.

I should like to speak about the Cresswell Crags, and Markland Grips, which are close to Welbeck, the residence of the Duke of Portland, and are still pointed out by the peasantry as Robin Hood's winter quarters.

The river Wollen runs far below their summits into the lake at Welbeck; and there are subterranean caverns in the Crags which are called Robin Hood's chamber, pantry, and parlor.

The "Major Oak" is of almost incredible dimensions. When you stand in front of it, it looks like a huge castle; and although eleven persons can pack themselves inside it, the old wooden walls are not half worn through. At six inches from the ground the trunk is ninety feet in circumference; at six feet from the ground, thirty feet; circumference of one of the arms, at a distance of four feet from the trunk, twelve feet; circumference at the extent of its branches, one hundred and forty feet; interior of the trunk twenty feet in circumference and fifteen feet in height.

A few yards from this majestic oak you cross the broad woodland glade, called Cockglade, because game-cocks were once kept in the Major Oak, which divides the Hays of Birkland from Bilhaugh.

And here a new world of wonder and beauty bursts upon you. As far as the eye can reach, over upland and valley, there is a magnificent array of birches, with their graceful, silvery trunks, and waving foliage, through which the breezes, when they are soft and low, make musical dirges, like the sound of a far-off sea.

There could not be a more startling and picturesque contrast than the birches of Birkland and the oaks of Bilhaugh. As you pass along this broad glade, or riding, you are often arrested by the grotesque forms of the oaks; and not unfrequently a troop of young birches are seen waving their fair arms and tresses over one of these solitaries, who, grim and sullen, appears as if he had been caught out of bounds, and suddenly enchanted by these beautiful nymphs. Beautiful they are indeed! For they have attained a stature and maturity which I never saw in any similar trees.

The "Shambles Oak," which derives its name from the fact that

a poacher used its hollow interior to hang up the quarters of the deer which he killed in the forest, is also a noted oak, although it is now fast decaying. It stands in the neighborhood of a vast forest of white thorn called Budby Forest; which in the month of May, when it is in full blossom and the sun shines on it, looks like a burning sea of snow.

Then there is the "Great Glade," which the Duke of Portland has cut and railed for eight miles through the forest, and planted on each side with the dark-green cedars of Lebanon. At the extremity of this magnificent riding, near Clipstone, the good Duke has erected a splendid *lodge*, which in its architectural design is a copy of a monastic gateway at Worksop. It is used as a central school-house — although it is half a mile or more from any other dwelling — for the children who live in the scattered hamlets of the forest. On the north side of the building there are effigies of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, Allan A Dale, and old Friar Tuck; on the south side there are similar sculptures — all life size — of Robin Hood, Little John, and Maid Marian.

These sculptures represent the *dramatis personæ* of the forest, and have given to Sherwood a national and world-wide interest. It will not be out of place, therefore, if I say a few words about the history — or what is known and conjectured of the history — of the leading character of the play.

We learn from various sources that Robin Hood was born at Loxley Chace, near Sheffield, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The most ancient traditions, as well as the most authenticated ballads, agree in describing him as a *yeoman*, driven to the woods by his hatred of the oppression of his time. *The Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode* very plainly calls Robin a *yeoman;* and as the Geste itself bears, in its entire structure, grouping, and keen discrimination and portraiture of character the mark o Chaucer's venerable genius, — although the poem has never been claimed as his by any of his editors, — there can be little question of the fidelity of the appellation. The accounts of Robin's appearance and accoutrements, which we find in the ballads of Ritson, are still further corroborations of his rank; and I have no doubt, as Chaucer's men and women are all types of *classes*, that Robin Hood is literally described in the Yeoman of the Canterbury Pilgrims.

Fordan, in the "*Scotichronicon*," says that Robin Hood fought with Simon de Montford at the battle of Evesham, in 1265, to enforce the recognition of Magna Charta, by Henry III.; and that

after the Earl's defeat (De Montford was Earl of Leicester) Robin Hood and Little John were among the dispossessed and banished; and that the people of his time were "extravagantly fond of celebrating them in tragedy and comedy above all others." Now Fordan lived only a century after this popular movement at Evesham, when the tradition of its heroes was vividly preserved by the populace; and what has been now adduced sets, I think, the question of his rank at rest. He has been styled Earl of Huntingdon in certain apocryphal ballads of a later period to Fordan's time; and a prosy writer in the Atlantic Monthly, reviewing Hunter's discovery of a Robin Hood's name on the Court books at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, of which, however, he can make nothing as to its identity with the Robin Hood of tradition, and finding, also, that even in Saxon times there was a hero of this name, the writer in question, I say, sets down the whole story as a fable, and makes poor Robin a myth.

There are various traditions of him, however, which, whether true or false, are valuable as evidences of the general impress which his character and actions stamped upon the memory of his time. Noble, generous, and brave, — a lover of the poor, and defender of their rights against the rich and the oppressor, he comes down to us like the hero of some old dim epic, whose author has taxed all the powers of his imagination to set in the most costly jewels of humanity. His encounter with Edward I., for instance, is full of human beauty. This king had offered large rewards for Robin, alive or dead, but none of his officers and spies could find him out. So, having conquered the Welsh, he came down to Sherwood, resolved to try what he could do with his bloodhounds and most trusty followers, in the way of extirpating the outlaw and his merry men. It is said he took up his abode at Clipstone Castle, and scoured the whole country round for many days without success. At last he went in disguise and wandered about the forest alone, in hope of meeting with his enemies. All these things were well known to Robin Hood, who managed to have his spies at Clipstone Castle. It was not long, therefore, before Robin showed himself to the king in full array of green and gold, equipped also with his bow and arrows, his short sword, and that little bugle-horn about which Edward had heard so many magical stories. The king demanded who this apparition of the wood might be?

"I am Robin Hood," answered the outlaw, nothing daunted at the presence of majesty.

"Then," returned the King, "we are well met; so stand to your guard."

But Robin wound his horn, and a hundred armed men rose up from the gorse and heather, as if by enchantment, demanding the will of their leader.

"It is to do reverence to the King of England that I have called you," said he; and Edward was so touched with this generous spectacle that he invited Robin and his men to court, with a promise of free pardon and protection. It is further said that the invitation was accepted, and that the maid Marian died during the year that Robin was at court. He was deeply affected by the loss of his beloved; and when spring returned he was so haunted with the olden memories of the woods and liberty that he left the King by permission, and returned to his old haunts and occupations.

In his eightieth year, whilst seeking hospitality of his cousin, who was prioress of the nunnery of Kirklees, he was bled wellnigh unto death by her orders, she being instigated to this act by Robin's old enemy, Sir Roger de Doncaster. Little John visited his chief during this his last sickness, and sadly wanted to call the band together for the purpose of burning "Kirkley Hall, and all their nunnery," as the old ballad has it. But the noble outlaw felt that he was closing his earthly account, and had no wish to draw any further upon Heaven's justice or forgiveness; so he answered Little John in these words: —

"I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at my end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I 'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.

Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet,
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet."

And there in the beautiful park of Kirklees, — the paternal estate of Sir George Armitage, — sleep the ashes of this venerable patriot.

The park is situated upon a high platform close to Cooper Bridge Station, on the Manchester and Leeds Railroad, commanding a magnificent sweep of country, including the fine old hills of Hud-

dersfield, the romantic vale of Calder, and the far-off, interminable moors, which run with but little intervals along the Backbone Mountains of England, right into North Britain. The grave of Robin Hood is fenced round with iron palisades, set into solid stone masonry, and covered by a large slab, brought most likely from the graveyard of the nunnery. The headstone contains an inscription setting forth the valor, generosity, and woodland gifts of the dead. The old Abbey Lodge still stands; and the room in which Robin died, and the window from which the arrow was shot, are still shown to the traveller. A part of the ancient hostelry of the abbey is likewise in existence, and retains its former usage; being a public house of entertainment for man and beast. It is well known in those parts by the sign of the "Three Nuns."

CHAPTER XLIII.

VISIT TO VIOLET AT THE OLD HALL.

FULL of these traditional and historical associations, I pursued my journey through the forest, towards Edwinstowe, and soon beheld the lofty spire of the church towering high above the tree-tops. Crossing the wide and open common which flanks the village on the forest side, I rode up to the village inn, and inquired the way to Budby Hall, where Violet lived. The landlord told me it was half a mile beyond the village, on the right of the Mansfield high-road. "But," he added, "you can't miss it, sir; because of the big iron gates, and the two dragons on each side of them." So I thanked the man, and was soon before the "big iron gates," where I found the "dragons" mounted upon massy stone pillars, which were spanned by a fine arch, decorated with heraldic emblems, and other sculptured devices.

A pretty cottage, called the Porter's Lodge, built in the Gothic style, stood on the right of the gates, with a little flower-garden in front of it, and the lattice-work round the door, and the lower and upper windows, were covered all over with honeysuckles and roses, which filled the air with their sweet perfume.

As soon as I rode up to the gates an old man issued from the cottage with a bunch of keys in his hand.

"You are the porter, friend," said I, "are you not?"

"Yes, sir, at your service," he replied, taking off his hat.

"Then be so good as open the gates; I have business at the Hall." And as the creaking iron revolved upon its hinges I rode forward under an avenue of the finest beech-trees I have ever seen, until I came in sight of the Hall, which was situated upon a gentle declivity, and was half hidden by tall ancestral trees, and surrounded with all its lawns, fish-ponds, and gardens, by a stone-wall, covered in many parts with the dark-green and glossy leaves of the ivy-plant, which were relieved and enlivened, here and there, by glowing hyssop-flowers. Niches were cut into the walls all along the "public walk," as it was called, for weary travellers to rest them-

selves in, who, in times gone by, were wont to pass that way; for formerly all the grounds of the Budby estate were open to the public, and the path leading through it was the nearest route from Welbeck Abbey to Edwinstowe. The clearing called the "Great glade," however, has thrown this Budby Hall path into disuse, as being nearer and more convenient to travel on.

I found the gates leading into the enclosed grounds wide open; so I rode up to the hall door, and having dismounted and rung the bell, a servant in livery soon made his appearance, to whom I handed my card for presentation to his mistress.

In another instant I heard bells ringing in various parts of the house, and the man-servant returned with a groom, who took charge of my horse, whilst I was ushered into a large, wainscotted room, which overlooked the garden and grounds, with the delightful assurance that "My lady" would be down in a few minutes.

It was a sultry morning, and the sloping lawns, shrubs, and flowers were steaming in the dissolving dew. The windows were wide open and delicious garden odors filled the room. In the middle of the lawn a fountain sent forth into the air its silvery streams, which, illuminated by the sunlight, fell down in continuous succession into a large and ample basin, the surface of which was covered with water-lilies in full white blossom; and looking through vistas of the trees I caught glimpses of pale statues, half concealed by their foliage; and heard the song of the linnet hard by, and the clear, sweet notes of the blackbird, coming from the distant copse. A large fish-pond was visible at the foot of the lawn, through another opening in the trees, on whose branching tops a colony of rooks had built their nests, keeping up a perpetual cawing, as they flew hither and thither, or hovered over their young.

Whilst I was admiring the quiet and unostentatious beauty of this scene, Violet suddenly entered the room, dressed as she was when I first met her, and looking more lovely than ever. In an instant we were in each other's arms, and I covered her whole face and brow with kisses.

"Darling," I said, "I am indeed happy, O most happy! to see you, and meet you thus, and feel, as I now feel, that you love me."

"Yes, dearest, I do love you," she replied; "and you have been uppermost in my thoughts every moment, by night and day, since we parted. And I have so longed to see you again, and reassure you of my love; for it is so sweet to love! It has given me a new life; and I am supremely happy."

"God bless you, dear one, for these words," said I; and again and again I pressed her to my heart, and then we sat down together by the open window, her hand in mine, and my thirsty eyes drinking in the divine beauty of hers.

After these first raptures had subsided, and it had become possible for us to speak of the less captivating things of common life, Violet inquired if I had visited the gypsy encampment and delivered her messages before I left Flamboro'. I assured her that I had done so, and that they were gratefully received, although I told her that Myra would not be persuaded to accept the generous offer which she had made her.

"I already know it," she replied, "from her own lips; and I am not, on reflection, surprised at it. She belongs to a proud and independent race, and I doubt, even if she had agreed to my proposals, whether she would have been so happy here as she is in her own tent, with her own people. But do you know," she added, "that this beautiful gypsy girl has completely fascinated me, and that I feel myself drawn towards her in a strange, mysterious manner, which I cannot account for at all? I seem to have grown more womanly since I took an interest in her, and I have received from her a new nature. I dare say you will think this very ridiculous, but it is quite true."

"She has, doubtless, been exercising her magic arts upon you, dearest," said I, smiling; "she certainly possesses supernatural gifts, if all I have heard of her be true. But I do not believe there is any harm in her."

"Nor do I, dearest; she seems to me as generous and noble as she is beautiful. But, tell me, did you speak to the gypsy youth who protected me and was so kind to me on the night of the burglary? And did you tell him how deeply I was grateful to him?"

"Assuredly I did; but he made very light of his assistance to you, and said it was n't worth thinking about; but I saw he was very pleased that you had thought it worth while to commission me to thank him in your name."

"I 'm glad of that. I wish I knew how to serve him.

"O, depend upon it, you will yet have both the knowledge and power to serve him. I feel quite sure of that."

"Why, dearest?" she asked, looking perplexedly into my face.

"Because you desire to do it," said I. "Do you think there are no good angels to take care of such as you, and contrive a practical outlet for their good wishes and designs?"

"I do not know, dearest; I should like to think so."

"I am sure of it. For, to the good, the way of radiating forth goodness in this world is very infallible. And I think I know even now how you, darling, can render a good and humane service to a much persecuted, though perhaps misguided man."

"Then, I pray you, love, make haste to inform me, that I may prove my willingness to do so by the promptness of my action."

So I told her Paul's history, so far as I knew it, and the charge against him, and the circumstances of his trial, to all which she listened with deep interest and sorrow, mingled with indignation. When I had concluded, she said: "But you have not told me who was the prosecutor in this case, which is certainly one of the most cruel and merciless instances of persecution which I have ever heard of."

"It was a clergyman, dearest Violet," I replied; "and worse still, it was a relative of yours."

"What! the rector of Flamboro'! You surely do not mean that he is the persecutor."

"I am sorry for your sake, darling, that it is so."

"And he," she replied, bitterly, "one of my guardians! Thank Heaven, I shall soon be free from his control."

"I fear I must pain you once again, dearest," said I, "by adding to this that Squire Graham issued the warrant for the poor fellow's arrest, and that he, — in all honesty of purpose, I believe, — was most uncompromising when the case was heard before the sitting magistrates."

"O," she cried, "this is indeed painful tidings! The good old squire! How could he be so blind to justice, and so cruel?"

"I am glad, dear one," said I, "that you regard this matter in the same light as I do; and now let me tell you how I think you can be of service to Paul. You are a great favorite, you know, with the squire, and he will do for your sake what he would do for no one else. Will you write to him, therefore, and show him the folly and injustice of this charge, and the consequent legal proceedings? Make him see the case as you see it, and then urge him to use his influence, and that of his brother magistrates, with the Home Secretary to get Paul liberated, on the plea of insanity."

"I am afraid the magistrates would think they were stultifying themselves by such a counter-movement, dearest," she replied.

"And doubtless they would think so," I rejoined, "if asked to take this step with no mitigating facts before them. But if it can

be proved that Paul is at times insane, then the magistrates would have sufficient ground, from this subsequent evidence, to take action in his favor."

"From what you told me just now," she replied, "whilst relating his history, I have no doubt the poor fellow is deranged, and I will do the best I can to help him. I will write to-day."

"I knew you would, darling," said I, drawing her close to me, and pressing my lips to her cheek. "Did I not tell you that the good angels always make opportunities for the good to do good?"

"Yes," she replied; "and now this being settled so far, come with me, dearest, and let me introduce you to my dear aunt and uncle."

Saying which she arose, and we walked together through the large hall into another room on the right hand, with folding glass-doors at the farther end of it, which led into a fine conservatory. Violet's aunt, whose name was Davenport, was alone when we entered, and evidently much interested in a book she was reading; for our presence did not disturb her in the least; and it was only after Violet had twice spoken to her that she roused herself, gazing first at her niece and then at me, in a state of extreme bewilderment. Violet laughed her merriest laugh as she said:

"Dear aunt, where have you taken yourself to? And what is the matter with you this morning? I want to introduce to you my friend Mr. Percy, with whose name and good services rendered to me you are already well acquainted."

"I beg your pardon, sir," exclaimed the lady rising, and advancing to take my hand, which she shook with warmth and energy. "I don't know how I came to be so rude and stupid; the truth is, I was so fascinated with this book that I was oblivious to everything else. But pray, sir, sit down; the spell is now broken; and I am very glad to see you. Violet, my dear," she added, addressing the beautiful girl, who was still smiling, "why did you not come and tell me who our visitor was, that I might have been prepared to receive him in a more courteous manner? I don't like to be taken thus by surprise in one of my absent book-fits."

"Dear aunt, I had no time to tell you," said Violet; "I could not keep my friend waiting, you know; and, besides, I was very anxious to see him."

"Of course, my dear, that was natural enough," replied Mrs. Davenport, "considering that you owe your life to him; but I should have been just as well pleased if I had known of his arrival; for

hospitable reasons, you understand, sir," she continued, bowing to me across the room.

"I beg, madam," said I, "that you will not allow so trivial a circumstance to disturb you on my account. I am only too happy in having the honor to make the acquaintance of so estimable a lady."

"It is very polite of you to say so, sir," she replied, "and I thank you for the compliment; but I am not pleased with myself, nevertheless. It must have seemed to you so very odd."

"Pray tell us, dearest aunt, what is the name of the book in which you were so completely absorbed," said Violet.

"It was a romance, dear; a musical romance! a most extraordinary book! I never read anything like it. It is a poem from beginning to end; and what is more, I am sure it was written by a woman."

"What is the title of it, aunt?"

"Charles Auchester," she replied; "the writer of it must have been enamored of music; it is a perfect passion with her, and the whole subject is wrought out with marvellous power, and with an enthusiastic love which never tires. I wish I knew the name of the beautiful authoress."

"I have heard her name," said I, "but I cannot recall it just now; I have also read the book, and agree with you in your estimate of it, madam. The lady, however, who wrote it is a Jewess, and a relative of the Baring family; and the book itself bears internal evidence of its Hebrew origin."

"Indeed it does," she replied; "it is full of the old Hebrew fire and genius, and could scarcely have been written by any of our modern Gentiles, — even the best of them. As a work of art it ranks with the highest; and it is immeasurably removed from the selfish atmosphere of that common life, with its vulgar aims and issues, in which ordinary novels and romances move."

"The value and beauty of the book," said I, "lie precisely there. Music is a divine thing, and must be worshipped with a holy love for itself alone; for its sweetness, gentleness, and purity; its sorrow and sanctity; its power and majesty and glory; and its revelations of, and responses to, whatsoever is highest and noblest in man's nature. It must be a sole, undivided love; into which no low, compensative consideration enters, itself its own divine recompense. And thus she seeks to exalt music and its votaries into the highest heaven of art; and by the greatness and even sublimity of her examples she rebukes the profanity of those sensuous worshippers who have con-

verted the holy religion of music into gross and animal orgies, where the soul can never enter."

"The worst of it is," said Mrs. Davenport, "that these Helots are so drunken with their fornications that they would neither read this book, if they had the chance, nor understand it if they did read it. Music, at the best, is very artificially studied in this day, and mostly for selfish purposes, — for display, or for pecuniary reward. Since Mozart, Handel, Haydn, and the rest left us, no one ventures into the arcanum of the divine science, penetrating its mysteries and unspeakable glories, and revealing what is given them to reveal in rapturous strains of divine harmony, whose inspiration and burden fill the soul of the entranced hearer, and bring him into direct communication with the highest spiritual sympathies and intelligences. I wish it were otherwise; and I have yet hope that it may one day become so. If a noble scholar, devoted to music, were once to read this book, — before he had been formalized by ignorant and low-minded professors, — I should have no fear of the result."

"Nor I either! Have you read 'Charles Auchester,' Miss Violet?" I asked.

"No," she replied; "I am ashamed to say I have not. It is a pleasure yet to come."

"Eh! What's a pleasure yet to come? you little minx!" said a little stout gentleman, bursting into the room like an avalanche, and going up to Violet with all a relative's familiarity, and chucking her gently under the chin. "What pleasure can such a butterfly, humming-bird, fairy-possessed little pet of the forest as you are have yet to come, I should like to know?"

Violet blushed and laughed, and Mrs. Davenport looked confused and half ashamed, which, when the stout little gentleman observed, he turned rather smartly round, exclaiming, "Eh! eh! what's the matter in the house?" and then observing me for the first time, he added: "Now by the teeth! Mrs. Davenport, I begin to think that I've made a fool of myself. Who is this gentleman? Is this the gentleman? Yes, by the teeth! I'll wager my Alliwal medal it is. How are you, sir? How are you, Mr. Percy? I'm glad to see you, sir! D—me if I'm not. Plenty of good fishing down here, sir. Killed two dozen trout this morning before breakfast, sir. Good ponds hereabout, too, sir: lots of pike fishing, and bottom fishing; and if you're fond of killing vermin, there's plenty of rabbits waiting to be shot in the covers."

This extraordinary speech was addressed to me, and amused and

pleased me not a little, for I saw that "Uncle Joe," who was the speaker, was a genuine character, and full of genial good-humor. So I thanked him for his kind welcome, and hoped we should have many a day's sport together.

"Certainly, sir," said he; "nothing like sport in the country. A capital occupation, sir, when a man has no higher game to follow. But if you want to see real sport, sir, war 's your game, sir! war 's your game!"

"Uncle Joe!" said Violet, "dear Uncle Joe! don't begin to fight your battles over again this morning, that 's a dear, good uncle! but sit down and let me ring for luncheon. Mr. Percy has had a long ride, and must want some refreshment."

"Certainly, my dear, certainly. By the teeth! a man who rides far must want something to eat, as you say, — it 's natural; so allow *me* to ring the bell, my little sunshine!"

With that the gallant colonel made a rush at the bell-rope, and in his hurry trod upon Mrs. Davenport's toes; and as the lady happened to be troubled with corns, she called out wofully with the pain, whilst Uncle Joe, thus suddenly arrested, stood over her with a comical face, entreating her "not to be hurt," because he "did n't mean it! — by the teeth! it was n't at all likely he did."

"But you might be more careful in your movements, Uncle Joe," said the lady: "you 're always in such a hurry, that I sometimes wonder you don't break your own neck. Now do be more careful in future, that 's a good fellow."

"To be sure I will, dear, to be sure I will. Who 'd have thought that old Joe could have been so clumsy. He deserves to be tried by a court-martial. He does, by the teeth!"

Luncheon was now brought in, and the table was adorned with vases full of the choicest flowers in the garden and conservatory. I could not help admiring them, they were so richly colored, fresh, and beautiful.

"I envy you your garden and conservatory, Miss Violet," said I, "more, I think, than any of your other possessions."

"I knew you loved flowers," she replied, "and I thought to please you by this display. But you need not envy me my possessions, as you call them; their chief value in my eyes, apart from their own beauty, is that they are capable of affording you pleasure, and you are to consider yourself quite at home here, and to appropriate whatever you may fancy."

"O Miss Violet," said I, "you must not think me selfish, nor con-

strue my words too literally. I shall be quite content to admire all I see, without desiring to put them into my pocket, I assure you."

"Well," interrupted Uncle Joe, "flowers and such gimcracks are very pretty things, I dare say, sir; but, by the teeth, sir, a glass of good wine is a much prettier, I think. So come, sir; let me have the pleasure of drinking one with you."

"Thank you, sir," I replied; "I shall be happy to drink with you if you will allow me — being a cold-water man — to fill my glass with the original crystal."

"Certainly, sir. By the teeth! certainly, sir!" said he, "if that's your custom. But mark me, sir, I should n't have thought it of you, to look at you, — I should n't indeed, sir; by the teeth! I should n't.'

"Uncle Joe," said Violet, "won't you ask aunt and me to join you? There will then be three water-drinkers to one wine-bibber and sinner."

"Whom do you call wine-bibber and sinner, you saucy hussy!" exclaimed the colonel. "However," he added, "I'll be even with you; I will, by the teeth! you provoking crossbreed! you beautiful nondescript, whose father was a rose and whose mother was a lily, — by the teeth! So fill up your glasses, ladies, and be careful the liquor don't get into your heads, I say."

Uncle Joe drained his glass like a man whose thirst was importunate, and he smacked his bearded lips after it, as if his palate relished it, and his goodly stomach took to it kindly and gratefully.

"By the teeth," said he, "that's the vintage of 1820! Your poor father Bob, your Uncle Joe's brother, my sweet little Violet, knew what good wine was; he did, by the teeth! He was none of your cold-water drinkers; not he, indeed! he liked his glass of wine, did brother Bob."

"But, Uncle Joe!" said Mrs. Davenport; "seeing that our guest here is a water-drinker, let me remind you that it is not courteous to speak of them in that way."

"Eh! ah! I did not think of that, — by the teeth! sir! Mr. Percy, sir!" he cried, rising from his seat; "I hope you won't think that I meant anything offensive, sir; by the teeth, sir! I did n't. I was n't thinking of what I was saying. Uncle Joe is *rather* too hasty at times, you see, sir, and — you won't think anything more about it — will you sir, eh? D—me for a fool."

"No, indeed, sir, I shall not, nor did I notice what seems to have struck Mrs. Davenport. And now, colonel, may I ask if you have

a spare rod by you? If it is agreeable, and you are not too tired, I shall be glad to have an hour or two's fishing, — after luncheon."

"I've got half a dozen rods, sir, by the teeth!" he exclaimed, "all at your service, as I am myself."

So when luncheon was over, the colonel went to his room to look up a rod and some tackle, and Violet invited me, in the mean while, to a stroll in the garden; Mrs. Davenport preferring to remain behind with Charles Auchester.

As we walked across the lawn, and enjoyed the fragrance of the flowers, Violet said to me: "Dearest, I hope good old Uncle Joe won't offend you with his queer, thoughtless speeches. He is an excellent person, but his life has been spent in the camp, and he is somewhat rough, although never intentionally rude."

"It would be impossible for me to take offence," I replied, "at anything he might say; for I should never forget that he was my darling's uncle."

"And what do you think of Aunt Davenport?" she asked.

"O, I like her very much, from what I have seen of her, and all the more so because she is fond of music and Charles Auchester, and has such exalted notions of the true vocation of musicians and composers."

"I am glad of that, dearest. I also love music, which is, indeed, a divine revelation, and speaks to us of things which are at once alien and familiar to the soul; bringing back to us dim visions of an experience which seems to belong to a *prochronic* state, — to immortality and eternity."

"I have recognized the same visitations, dearest," said I; "and when you read Charles Auchester you will have a more distinct consciousness of these spiritual presences. How is it, darling, that you have not read this book?"

"I never heard of the name of it until this morning," she replied, "and I do not know how aunt came into the possession of it. But be sure I shall read it. Good books are not so plentiful that one can afford to pass them by. But hark! there is Uncle Joe calling us. Let us take the beech avenue, dearest, and return to the Hall."

So I took her dear hand in mine, and led her thither through a wilderness of sweets. "And now," I said, "one long, long kiss, my own darling!" but I had scarcely time to snatch a very short one, before another and nearer shout from Uncle Joe interrupted the delicious feast I had so passionately hoped and longed for.

"Where are you, you truants?" he exclaimed; "and you, sir! Mr. Percy, by the teeth! what are you doing with my saucy lady-bird? Where are you, I say?"

"Here we are, Uncle Joe," cried Violet, suddenly pulling aside the foliage and flowers of a large lilac-tree, and flashing on the lawn before him. "And now tell me, Uncle Joe," she added, "what do you want with us?"

"O, I don't want you, Sunshine!" he said; "you can go where you please, and do what you please; I want my comrade here. What say you, Mr. Percy, are you ready to foot it to the fishing-ground?"

"Quite ready, sir," said I.

"Then, right about face, sir! quick, march!" and the singular old colonel wheeled round and led the way back to the Hall.

CHAPTER XLIV.

FLY-FISHING IN THE MAUN. — THE OLD COLONEL AND GEORDIE.

"JUST the day for fly-fishing, sir! Just the day, by the teeth!" said Uncle Joe, as we walked through the fields towards the chittering river Maun, whose waters we were going to fish. "And look you, sir! that heap of rubble on the hill yonder is all that remains of one of the oldest, largest, and most famous castles, by the teeth, sir! in all England."

"Then that is Clipstone Castle," said I, "is it not?"

"No, sir, that's not Clipstone Castle, sir; no more than Uncle Joe's leg would be Uncle Joe himself, sir. But, by the teeth! it's all that's left of Clipstone Castle."

"I have heard that it was a favorite abode of the English kings, from William the First's time, down to that of Henry the Eighth," said I.

"That's true, sir, by the teeth! and swearing by the teeth, sir, reminds me to ask you if you happen to know what this first William of England, — this bastard of Normandy, — who died such an infernal death at Rouen, used to swear by?"

"I do not know that I ever heard of his favorite oath. Something very big and terrible, I've no doubt it was, for he was a big and terrible fellow."

"That's true again, sir," said he; "and his oath was the finest and grandest thing in the record of human speech. 'By God's splendor!' he used to swear, sir, and that's what I call an oath worthy of a king, sir, and a conqueror, sir, and takes the shine out of the 'teeth' considerable."

"And this sublime swearer used to hunt over these very fields, I suppose, when they were covered with the aboriginal trees of the forest."

"Yes, sir; and so did Dick the Lion, — Richard the First he is called in the history books; and here he entertained the king of Scots in 1194. King Jack the traitor and tyrant used to hunt here; and

all the Edwards and Henrys, until bluff Hal the Eighth gave the castle and park to the Earl of Surry, creating him Duke of Norfolk with the gift. It is now owned by my friend, the Duke of Portland, sir, — a d—d good fellow, you see; who has a son as good as himself, by whose leave we are going to fish the river Maun to-day."

In a short time we were on the banks of the little stream which has been dignified with the name of river, and, arranging our tackle, we were soon engaged in the exciting sport.

We wandered a long way up the stream, and did not cease fishing until we arrived at Edwinstowe Bridge. Uncle Joe was about a hundred yards ahead of me; and by the time I came up, he had wound his line on the reel, and was ready to return.

"Dinner at five o'clock, sir. Half past four now, sir; no time to be lost. What sport, sir? by the teeth, sir, what sport?" said he, as I placed my creel on the grass, and began to pack up my fishing-gear.

"Three dozen, colonel," I replied, "minus two; and some few of them will weigh two pounds and a half each."

"Gad! sir, I should like to see them," he said; and with that he stooped down and began to overhaul the fish.

"You beat me, sir," he exclaimed; "better fish, and more of them than I've killed, by the teeth! What fly did you use, sir?"

"The little black fly, colonel; the tiny, little black midge, my favorite bait; which has done more execution for me than all the drabs, and colored shams, in my fishing-book. This is the fellow, colonel, which has done all the mischief to-day," said I, presenting the hook.

"By the teeth!" said he, "that's odd enough; for, mark you, sir, there's no black fly in the stream to-day; it's a brown fly, sir, you see," he added, pointing to the weeds on the bank, where numbers of them were sporting.

"Very true, colonel," I rejoined, "and yet you perceive that I have been successful with the little black fly."

"Yes, sir, by the teeth! I do perceive it, and that's what puzzles me," he replied. "However, it's time we were jogging, sir. Won't do to keep our stomachs waiting for the dinner, sir."

So we walked through the ancient and venerable town of Edwinstowe, and returned to the Hall by a foot-path over the forest.

CHAPTER XLV.

A QUIET EVENING AT THE HALL.—UNCLE JOE ON MILITARY MATTERS.

WE enjoyed the trout amazingly, and the rest of the good things provided for us at the table; for we were hungry, and hunger, says the proverb, is the best sauce. When dinner and dessert were over, and the ladies had retired, and the colonel had drank enough of the good old port wine, he proposed that we should seek the shade of the trees in the garden, and enjoy a quiet cigar. The proposition suited me well, and in a short time we were stretched on the grass, making sufficient smoke.

"You never were in India, sir, I think," said the colonel, after we had exhausted the subject of fishing and other ordinary topics.

"No, sir, but I have a strong curiosity to see that strange and wonderful country; and I should like especially to examine its primordial monuments, and those gigantic ruins of which there is no record either in history or tradition. The Sanscrit literature is also very attractive to me, although I know it only through the translations of Mr. Colebrooke, Sir W. Jones, and the publications of the 'Asiatic Researches.'"

"Pooh! pooh! sir, all moonshine. Who cares about the Hindoo temples, or the Brahmin jargon about the 'Raja Goon' and the 'Tama Goon,' and the doctrine of the hide-and-go-peep of souls? By the teeth, sir! such stuff is all very well for old Brahmins and old women; but war's the only study worthy of a man, sir! and a soldier, sir! And an Englishman of condition, sir, mark you, should be ashamed to go to India for any other purpose."

"You seem to be very fond of your profession, sir," said I; "and it is natural enough, seeing that you have been bred and born to arms; but I, a poor civilian, have no such love for it, although I am far from being a peace man."

"A peace man!" he exclaimed, drawing up his face like a corkscrew, and whistling a long and loud blast out of his lips; "I should think you're not a peace man, sir, by the teeth! No man of sense

ever was. That peace doctrine, sir, is the most absurd, unphilosophic humbug ever preached in the ass-hovel of Exeter Hall, or elsewhere. Do you not know, sir, that war has been the greatest of all civilizers, preparing the way for commerce, and Christianity, and all that, sir?"

"I grant its historical uses, colonel," said I, "and even believe that it is a necessity in human affairs, and absolutely beneficent in its final results. So that I could not say, with the great Fox, 'I prefer the most unjust peace to the justest war,' because I should feel myself to be a traitor to my own soul, and to the rigid justice of the universe, if I were to indorse that saying. A just war, — a war for right against wrong, — for freedom against oppression, — seems to me the proper action of intelligent and responsible beings; and I would not consent to live in a country which would compromise its liberty to the degrading overtures of peace, — peace at all costs."

"That 's it, sir, — by the teeth, sir! that 's it! That 's what I call soldierly! Why were n't you a soldier, sir?"

"I don't like the profession, sir. I would enter the ranks to-day, or to-morrow, in defence of my country, and that liberty which is dearer to me than life, — but I could never become a professional soldier."

"And why not, sir? A little bloodshed, more or less, is no great matter; and a tough battle keeps the hand in, and the pluck up, unless you happen to be smashed by a cannon-ball, or otherwise disabled. Alexander and Cæsar, Tamerlane, Napoleon, and Wellington, were all professional soldiers, sir; and even the d—d Yankee nation, whose forbears licked us so dreadfully and shamefully at Bunker's Hill, as they call it, — although they did n't lick us there, sir, let me tell you, but elsewhere, and be d—d to them! — even these Yankees, sir, had their George Washington, — a professional soldier, sir! — and I must say, in spite of my gall, a most noble, generous, humane man; and possessed, as a commander, of the finest qualities both moral and intellectual which ever belonged to a military chieftain. What 's the matter then, sir, with the profession? Come, sir, I pin you to that! By the teeth, sir! answer me that!"

"Uncle Joe! Uncle Joe!" exclaimed a voice, which I knew to be Violet's, "where are you, Uncle Joe? The coffee is waiting for you in the drawing-room, Uncle Joe."

"There, sir!" said he, "it 's always so. Just like these women folk! The moment we men get into a serious argument upon serious

subjects, — affecting the state and the public morals, and what-not, — down come these women folk to interrupt us. Well, hussy!" quoth the colonel, as Violet came up to our bivouac, "what *do* you want? Can't you let us talk and smoke in peace, until we are ready to give in, and follow in your wake of our own accord?"

"No, uncle dear!" said Violet, "I can't do anything of the sort. Coffee is ready, and you must come and drink it."

"Very well, you impudent baggage!" said he; — "'*impedimenta*' I ought to say to be classical," he added, "unless I designed to speak to you, O violet eyes! as a singular person, — which you undoubtedly are, — although I had no intention of denominating you as such, wishing you to understand that I consider you a plural nominative containing the whole camp equipages in your own feminine gender. And so, sir," said he to me, "let us march straight away in obedience to orders!"

Whereupon the gallantly ungallant colonel rose on his legs, and led the way once more into the Hall, and so into the drawing-room.

I love coffee, and the repose of the drawing-room after dinner, and the inspiring presence of the beautiful, awaiting women. And much as I also love a masculine jaw, and the unrestrained license of genial conversation which always follows the departure of ladies from the dinner-table, yet I grudge every moment of the time as so much real loss of that far-reaching, over-compensating pleasure which the drawing-room contains, and which it so graciously reserves to unworthy laggards over the wine. And on this occasion I was doubly glad to get within its precincts, because I rather naturally preferred the beauty and conversation of Violet to the warlike speech of Uncle Joe, the colonel.

We spent a very delightful evening in that fine old Gothic drawing-room, the front windows of which opened upon a stone balcony overlooking the garden; and as we talked, the nightingale sang to us, and the moon and stars lit up the garden and the wide woodland landscape beyond it, — and two of us at all events were very happy.

CHAPTER XLVI.

DREAM-MUSIC. — A SPIRIT AT MIDNIGHT. — VERSES.

MY sleeping apartment was an old tapestried chamber, very large and lofty, having a great oak beam running in the middle of the ceiling, from wall to wall. The mantle-piece was composed also of oak, very richly carved, and black with age, surmounted by the arms of the Pierpoint family. There were broad oaken seats, too, in the window recesses; and the floor was of oak, polished and brightened so that you might almost see your face in it; and I discovered at last that all the furniture in the room — bedstead, chairs, drawers, and tables — were of the same material. It was clearly an antique chamber, dating its age by centuries; and I was to sleep that night on timbers cut from forest trees which were old, perhaps, in the reign of King John!

I was not much inclined for sleep, however, at present; I was far too happy to exchange my delicious consciousness for a dead and dreamless oblivion. So I opened the casement of one of the windows and sat gazing on the outstretched landscape, with its moonlight and shadows, listening to the song of the nightingale, and enjoying my own sweet thoughts of love and Violet. I indulged, I dare say, in this romantic feeling for a full hour or more; and then I bethought me that perhaps bed would be quite as good for my constitution as this midnight watching, so to bed I went.

I lay awake for a long time, revolving in my mind all the strange and wonderful events of my personal history during the last ten weeks, marvelling greatly what the end of it all would be, what would become of poor Paul? and what destiny was in reserve for dear and noble-minded Myra? For myself, and the issue of my love for Violet, I had no doubt or misgivings. It was all written in the book of Fate, and I joyously resigned myself to the certainties of the future. But what had happened to me in my past experience, — constituting, indeed, the staple as well as the mystery of it, — occurred to me again that night, and with a perfectly irresistible power, namely, the impossibility I felt of divorcing Violet from Myra, and Myra from Violet! Each was a dual unity — if I may

so express myself — of the other; and I could not separate them. I tried hard to accomplish this separation; and reasoned with myself that it was morally wrong in me to bind these two persons together in my soul, and love them both as if they were one. But it was all of no use, it was inevitable!

Then I bethought me of what Violet herself had said, namely, that, since her last interview with Myra, she had been strangely attracted towards her, — passionately attracted, — and that this sympathetic union and harmony had quickened her own maidhood into womanhood. And like a flash of light the words of Myra during her magnetic sleep recurred to me, — "I alone can and will fit her to be your bride!"

But the meaning of this? I but dimly guessed it. Nor was I fully master of it until long afterwards.

On a sudden I heard, as I lay there on my bed, strains of surpassing melody, which seemed to dissolve my whole being; and I was floated consciously away into regions of voluptuous beauty, whose portraiture no pen nor pencil could delineate. I am quite certain the music was real, for I pinched my sides to assure myself I was awake, and bit my lips until the blood foamed from my mouth, so anxious was I to convince myself of its reality. And to make assurance doubly sure, I arose and sat upright, backing myself with the pillows; and I still heard the same music.

At first I thought it possible that these delicious strains might proceed from some contiguous chamber, whose occupant, like me, was restless and sleepless, and who sought thus to wile away the long hours of the night. "It is Violet," said I to myself, "my own beautiful Violet! who thus seeks to wile away the sleepless hours of the night." And then the music grew louder and nearer as if to convince me I was in error; and at last I was so overcome by it that I readjusted my pillows and abandoned myself to its influence.

Then a dearly loved voice called me by name, and asked me if I wished ever to be separated from her, and I cried aloud, "No, dearest Myra! No! never! Be thou to me always my own, dearest Myra!" And she answered, "Yes, Geordie! Ever thine!"

Then I felt a rosy cheek against mine, and my shoulders were covered with dark lustrous hair, and my lips were kissed with passionate kisses, — to which those lips answered, as if a whole eternity of love, sealed until that moment within them, had suddenly burst forth in quenchless, consuming flames. Again I desired to test the reality of this; for it was so intoxicating that I doubted the evidence of my

own senses; and again I was convinced. For standing by my bedside was Myra, now calm and passionless; but oh! most beautiful! More beautiful than I had ever beheld her, and, placing her hand in mine, she said: "Geordie! O, dear, dear Geordie! why do you doubt that I am with you? Did I not tell you that I would ever be with you? That love knows not time nor space, but compasses both as if they were not? And is it strange to you that I should thus appear to you now? You know my form and features, my voice, and what is in the depths of my heart: and out of those depths have I spoken to you, and overshadowed you."

"Forgive me, Myra, my own darling!" said I, "that I have thus doubted you, and come yet nearer to me that I may be still more sure it is you. Ah!" I exclaimed, folding my arms round her waist and looking into her eyes; "what transformation is this? Violet! O Violet! is this indeed you? Dear, dear Violet! why have you thus deceived me?"

And in an instant the whole chamber was illuminated, — tapestry, oak-carving, oak furniture, and heavy crimson window-curtains, all flashed into sight; and Violet, transfigured by Myra, vanished out of my chamber door.

I did not sleep a wink that night, and at daybreak next morning I arose and rambled through the forest far and wide, thinking chiefly of Violet, and making a poem for her as my orison. On my return I met Violet in the garden.

"Where have you been, dearest?" she asked, as I gave her my hand, and the greeting of the day. "I have been looking for you upwards of an hour; for Edward told me you had long since left your room. O, I had the strangest dream last night, and I long to tell you, dearest, what it was, but I am afraid you will think me unmaidenly if I do. Shall you, dearest?"

"No, indeed, my beautiful! Whatever you do, I am sure will be the best and most befitting to be done. But before you commence your dream story allow me to present you with these forest flowers; and to repeat to you a poem which I have composed for you, but have not had time to copy for your acceptance."

"A poem!" she exclaimed; "O dearest, that will be delightful! Pray repeat it."

So I did; and here it is: —

Here, I have brought thee, sweet, a bunch of flowers,
Such as the woodland yields;
Wet with the dew-drops of the dewy showers,
Which bathe the woodland fields.

The sun was scarcely up, when I went out
To fetch these sweets for thee;
And thou wert tossing on thy bed about,
Nor thought of them nor me.

But I, whose soul is of thine image full,
Whether by night or day,
Dreamed such sweet dreams of thee, my beautiful!
This morning as I lay,

That waking, I arose intent to bring
Sweets to thy beauty, home,
And here they are, — thy true love's offering!
But wherefore did I roam?

Why seek for nature's lovely things abroad,
When loveliness is here?
And in thy face, as at an angel's board,
All sweetness doth appear.

"And now, darling," I added, "no remarks; but commence the relation of the dream."

"Are you not too exacting, dear one?" she said; "ought I not really to thank you — as indeed I must — for this poem?"

"No; I do not deserve thanks. I am not quite sure that I am not a traitor to you, although I made those verses to your honor and glory, dearest Violet."

"How so? That cannot be. You would never turn traitor! You, who told me from the first, that you loved me! You whom I also love."

"Come hither, Violet," said I, "come close to me, so that our eyes can look into each other; and give your sweet, sweet hand in mine, so that we can feel each the pulsation of the other's heart. I love you, Violet, dearer than all the world, and until I saw you I never loved before. I have often thought that I loved; but now I know that I did not love; that I cheated myself into the belief of love, and got the mere semblance of the divine passion. But, listen to me, darling, and believe what I say to you, for I will speak to you the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. During the last few weeks, both before and after I knew you, I have been enamored of a noble and beautiful girl, against my will, against my conviction of what is right and honorable, — and yet I have done nothing which is dishonorable towards her, nor anything of which I am ashamed to speak openly to you. And, stranger than

all, we both love each other, knowing that it is utterly impossible that any closer union should bind us than that which already binds us. We both know also that you and I are destined for each other; and she knows that, although I love her much, I love you more; and lately so much, that I scarce love her at all; although her image always fuses itself into yours whenever I think of you. Violet, how is this?"

"I do not know, dearest!" she replied. "I have full faith in you; I know you would not deceive me; and I am sure I would not deceive you; and yet," she added, "that dream spoke to me like a prophecy."

"What was it, dearest?" I said; "pray tell me what it was."

"That Myra was your own true Violet's rival," she replied.

"Myra!" I exclaimed; "how could such a thought enter your head, little one?"

"I cannot tell; it came to me in a dream."

At this moment the breakfast bell rang, and we hurried across the lawn to be in time for prayers, which were always read by Uncle Joe before the morning meal.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A TRANSIENT LOVE SCENE.

I SPENT a month at the Hall; and every day brought its own pleasure and beauty; and gave me endless opportunities of appreciating Violet's fine qualities both of heart and mind. I found in her all that my soul longed for; a high spiritual and intellectual sympathy, and a profound womanly love. We had become all in all to each other, and were rarely separated, except during those hours which for sport and exercise I gladly devoted to Uncle Joe. We occasionally received visits from the neighboring gentry, — but otherwise we were quite secluded, and lived in a world of our own. Music and singing, books and conversations upon books, charmed away the hours of evening in the drawing-room; or Violet and I took long evening walks through the forest, watching the effects of sunset upon the trees, and the golden illuminations which streamed down through their tangled branches upon the grassy glades. On one of these occasions, the fancy embodied in the following lines struck me so forcibly that I could find no rest until I had put it into its present form.

THE FOREST SUNSET.

The sun is setting; down the glade
Flames his great brow of fire;
The forest trees all silent stand
To see their god expire,
And the night-wind sweeps her trembling lyre.

The sky is bathed in crimson light;
His head rests on a cloud.
"O leave us not!" the green leaves say;
But he lies in his shroud,
And the old, old oaks they sough aloud.

A sombre shadow in the west
Has laid his red corpse out;
And with him, sinking down the heavens,
Their curtain draws about,
And muffled phantoms follow on their route.

"O aged oaks! all black and bare,
I pray ye, groan not so!
O birches! with dishevelled hair,
And voices weeping low,
Why do your eyes with tear-drops overflow?

"He is not dead! He does but sleep!
He 'll come again to you.
The night is here! Why will ye weep?
The starlight rushes through
The lattice-work of heaven, to love you, too.

"Lift up your heads! The sweet, young moon
Is dancing o'er the grass;
Her smiles are music, passing soon!
Ye will not let her pass,
Without one welcome, answering smile, — alas!

"Ah no! dear forest hearts, rejoice!"
The bald oaks shout amain;
The birches weep no more, but wave
Their arms without a stain,
And winds and woods are merry once again.

I, of course, gave these rhymes to my beloved; and she, of course, carefully preserved them; for love cherishes trifles with a pure and holy joy, the experience of whose sanctity and beneficence the worldling and the miser are jealously deprived of.

One evening, after our return from one of these long forest rambles, we found that Uncle Joe and Mrs. Davenport had been carried off by a neighboring friend to spend the evening. So we had the drawing-room to ourselves, and Violet sat down to the piano, and sang at my request one of the finest passages from the Sonnambula. She was an accomplished singer, an artiste, whose fealty was glorified by her genius; and she played as finely as she sang. I thought I had never heard this music interpreted with such exquisite feeling before; and I was thrown by it into a perfect ecstasy. When she had concluded, she came and sat down beside me on the sofa; and I put my arms round her lovely waist, and drew her to my heart.

"Violet," I said; "my own dear Violet! I have now been your guest for nearly three weeks, and every day and hour of the day I have found something sweeter and dearer in you to love, and almost to worship. In a few days I must return to my duties, and for a while, at least, we must be separated. I cannot bear to part

with you, and I know I shall be most unhappy when I am away from you. And now, dearest, answer me; may I hope that, one day, you will consent to be my own dear, dear wife?"

"O dearest!" she said, flinging her arms round my neck, and flooding my face with the golden glory of her hair, — "how can you ask me such a question? Have I not told you that I loved you? And have not you also said and proved that you loved me? And can you suspect that I have exchanged my love for yours in mere sport or vanity? My love is for life and death, and eternity," she added, with deep, and almost severe earnestness; "and so, dearest," she continued, "you may claim your wife whenever you are willing to receive her."

There! as big Toon said aforetime, "that is happiness enough for one day, and so I 'm goin' to eat humble pie, and be thankful."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE REVEREND JEREMIAH GRIMES. — HIS ERRAND TO THE HALL IN THE FOREST, AND WHAT HE GOT IN CHANGE.

ABOUT noon on the following day, whilst I was engaged in reading the *Phædo* of Plato to Violet in the garden, — the *Phædo* being a book which she prized more highly than any secular writing, and which she was never weary of listening to, — Uncle Joe suddenly appeared before us, with a most woebegone face, and announced the arrival of the Reverend Jeremiah Grimes, Rector of Flamboro', and one of Violet's guardians.

"I don't know," said uncle, "what the good man is after; but he is particularly disagreeable, and gives himself a whole cohort of airs, as if he were lord and master of Budby Hall, its lands and appurtenances. He is already closeted with Mrs. Davenport, and says he desires to have a special interview with my Lady Violet, upon business of great importance to her."

"But, dear Uncle Joe," said Violet, blushing like a full-blown rose, "I don't want to see the man. I dislike him. He is neither a Christian nor a gentleman, and I ask you, dear, good Uncle Joe, to prevent him from seeing me."

"Why, what for now, Sunshine? What has the man done, that you want me to cut his throat so mercilessly? I must have some good reason for a work of that sort. It is n't to be done without cause, mark you, little Sunshine!"

"True, dear Uncle Joe! And be sure I don't want you to harm him. But pray keep him away from me; I 'll tell you why I wish it, hereafter; and I am sure if you knew now what I know of his meanness and baseness, you would not sit in the same room or house with him. Believe me, Uncle Joe! I never told you an untruth in my life, and I shall not begin to do so now."

"But what am I to say to this animated Hop-Pole? with the long, Praise-God-Bare-Bones face?"

"Tell him," said Violet, "that I positively refuse to see him; and that he is well acquainted with the reason."

"Eh! what do you say, Miss Violet?" said he, very earnestly, and advancing a step or two in her direction; "I hope I misunderstand you. I hope there is no just ground for me to blow the fellow's brains out."

"Sir," said I, "allow me to explain this matter to you privately. I am acquainted with Miss Violet's reasons for not wishing to meet Mr. Grimes, and, if you will do me the honor to hear me, I think I can convince you that she is right in her decision."

"Very good, sir," replied the colonel; "and I shall be glad to hear you. But I hope I misunderstand at present. For you see, sir, if the Archbishop of Hell had offered the shadow of an insult to my little Sunshine there, I'd have his heart's-blood, sir, by God! I would!"

"I am very glad, colonel," said I, "to assure you that nothing of the sort has happened; and yet enough has happened in another direction to make any lady, or any true gentleman, refuse to meet this man."

I had scarcely uttered these words when Mrs. Davenport and the Rector issued in great excitement from the Hall, and advanced directly towards us. There was now, therefore, no evading an interview, and so we quietly awaited it.

Without any kind of preface, or apology for thus intruding upon us, the Rector opened his batteries. "I am here, Miss Violet," he said, "as your guardian and relative, to warn you of the dangerous position in which you have placed yourself in the eyes of the world, by entertaining a stranger for so long a time in your house. I am aware that in doing so I lay myself open to misconstruction, but there are so many scandalous rumors abroad respecting this matter, that I should fail in my duty to you if I did not make you acquainted with the fact, and urge upon you the necessity of putting an end at once to these rumors in the only way which is open to you."

"And who are you, sir," exclaimed Violet, "who dare thus to arraign my conduct, interfere with my private affairs, and insult my name by coupling it with your scandalous rumors? Who gave you the ordering of my house, and the right to dictate to me what friend or friends I shall receive into it? It would be affectation in me to pretend not to know that your shafts are pointed to Mr. Percy, and that you desire me to insult him by ordering my servants to show him the door, as you, sir, had the meanness to insult him in your Coward's Castle at Flamboro'. But I beg to assure you, sir, that you will take nothing by this motion of yours except my supremest contempt."

"And mine too, sir!" said the choleric colonel. "By the teeth, sir, you are the most impudent blackguard in black I have ever met with in my lifetime. Mrs. Davenport and I, sir, are supposed to be respectable people, sir, in these parts; and we take, sir, upon ourselves, the responsibility of Mr. Percy's visit to us, and consider it an honor, sir, to entertain him, — by the teeth!"

"You, of course, sir," said the imperturbable parson, "inquired into the character of Mr. Percy before you received him at the Hall."

"Colonel," said I, rising from the rustic arbor seat where I had been sitting all this while, "I cannot allow Mr. Grimes to proceed with these gross and unprovoked personalities; nor will I remain quietly here and have my character challenged by him in this most unusual and most unpardonable manner. I ask you therefore sir, to interpose your authority, and compel him to use language which a gentleman may listen to before ladies."

"Certainly, sir, by the teeth! If he 'd said half as much to me I would have called him out and shot him like a dog."

"I 'm much obliged to you, Colonel Pierpont," replied the parson; "and I do not wish to be offensive, either to you or Mr. Percy, or to my lovely ward; but I must again ask you if you are aware of Mr. Percy's antecedents. Do you know that he has long been the associate of gypsy prize-fighters, poachers, and vagabonds, living in the same tents with them, and sharing in their depredations? And I ask you, sir, and you, madam, — and I appeal to Miss Violet herself, — if such a person is fit to visit at this Hall, and be received here upon terms of equality with its inmates?"

I confess that this sudden and unlooked for revelation by the wily parson took me all aback, whilst it made the colonel stare bewildered and amazed. Mrs. Davenport evinced, by her silent demeanor, a painful interest in the scene, and Violet looked at me for a moment with inquiring eyes, then hung down her head, and blushed profoundly.

"Well, Mr. Percy, sir, by the teeth, sir!" said the colonel, as soon as he could find his tongue, "what do you say to this man's charges, sir? Does he speak the truth, sir? For if he don't I 'll choke him with his own lies, sir, by the teeth, I will!"

"I fear, colonel," I replied, "that I must plead guilty to having been an associate of these gypsy vagabonds, and I may as well add that I have spent nearly all the summer with them, and found them pleasant, healthy, and instructive companions. I like the gypsies,

and the wild life they live; and it is a pleasant occupation for me to study their manners, customs, traditions, and language. My first introduction to them, however, was quite accidental, — a tremendous storm of rain and wind obliging me to seek shelter in their tents, during one of my expeditions after certain local antiquities. Mr. Grimes is right, therefore, you see, colonel, as to the fact of my association with these gypsy vagabonds, but there is one thing which I must insist upon his authority for stating; this, namely, that I have shared in certain depredations committed by the gypsies. And now, Mr. Grimes," said I, "produce your authority for this grave charge, and tell me what these depredations are."

"It is enough for me, sir," he said, "and I am sure it will be enough for all present, that you have confessed you are an associate of these thieves and vagabonds; and I do not feel myself bound to specify any particular depredation in which you may have taken part with them."

"By the teeth, sir!" cried the colonel, in a perfect fury at these words, "but you shall specify them, or else recall the charge, and ask pardon. You shall, sir! do you hear?" he added, shaking his bamboo cane in the parson's face.

"But I am not disposed to do so, my good friend," replied the oily Christian. "I have let you into the character of your respectable guest, and if you keep him longer within your walls it will be to your own dishonor, not mine."

"Blood and wounds!" cried the colonel; "I won't hear such language as this. Aunt Davenport, fetch my pistols! fetch my pistols! I say. By God, Mr. Percy, he shall fight you in spite of his black coat."

"Don't think of such a thing, colonel," said I; "the man is too great a coward to fight. I had the honor of challenging him not long ago, in his own house, at Flamboro', and he was too pigeon-livered to go out with me. And as for his insulting language to me at present, I don't care a rush about it, and am amply revenged, because, with all his malice and cunning, he has failed in the object which brought him here."

"And to make your failure more complete, my beloved guardian," said Violet, "allow me to constitute you my confessor. Until this moment I was not aware that Mr. Percy had ever lived with these vagabond gypsies you speak of; nor did I, except by a sort of sympathy, recognize in him a good gypsy youth who once saved me from being dashed to pieces by Squire Graham's horses, and again

rescued me from robbery and violence on the night of the burglary in your own house. But now I see through it all, and you have to thank him, — if indeed it is possible for so evil a man as you are to be thankful for your own life, and the safety of your dear property. This, however, will not, I dare say, interest you at all; but when I tell you, — what I hope my dear aunt and uncle will pardon me for hearing now for the first time, — namely, that I love Mr. Percy, and that with their consent I will marry Mr. Percy, perhaps you may feel some little interest in the statement, because I know it will defeat a favorite project of yours. And now, sir, I believe that I am the owner of this house and estate, — and you will oblige me by taking your departure instantly, and so save me the trouble of having you turned out by my servants."

So saying, Violet came up to me, and placing her hand in mine, permitted me to conduct her down the beech avenue. I had not time to express my gratitude to the dear girl for her generous avowal, because we were immediately followed by Mrs. Davenport, who flung her arms round Violet's neck, exclaiming, "O Violet! dear Violet! what have you said! How could you make such a confession so openly? And why did you not tell me and Uncle Joe before?"

"Dearest aunt," she replied, "I had fully intended to have done so this very evening; but I could not hear Mr. Percy so grossly insulted without proving my regard for him in the way I did; the only way open to me to stop those scandalous rumors, you know, dear aunt!" she added, smiling.

"And I hope, madam," said I, "that you will pardon me for being so happy as to gain the love of so good and beautiful a girl; and believe me, I will try through life to prove myself not altogether unworthy of her."

"Well, sir," she said, "I do not disapprove of her choice, but it is so sudden and unexpected. I will go to Uncle Joe, however, and talk with him about it, as soon as our anxious visitor has left the house; and I have to apologize to you, sir, in the name of us all, for the indignities which this really bad man has heaped upon you."

She then left us, and we continued our walk to the fish-ponds, which were covered with water-lilies. Here we rested under the friendly shadows of the overhanging trees.

"And so, dearest," she said, "you are my gypsy boy, are you? And I was not deceived that day as we sat together on the heath, when I told you that I must have met you before, — and that you gave me the butterfly, — and knew all about the fortune-telling!

You kept up your character pretty well, but tell me now why you assumed it."

I then entered into a full explanation of all those circumstances and events with which the reader of this history is already familiar. When I had concluded, she said, "Then, dearest, my dream was true. Myra *is* my rival."

"Do not say that, dear one. I have told you all without reserve; and if you think over it, you will find that you never really had a rival in my heart."

I had a long conversation that evening with Uncle Joe, which ended by his cordial approval of my union with his niece. He was satisfied with my family descent and connections, my income and social position; and all obstacles were now clear for the wedding.

CHAPTER XLIX.

PAUL DRADDA SENTENCED BY JUSTICE COLERIDGE FOR "BLASPHEMY."

I HAD received no communications either from Myra or Profanoake for upwards of ten days, and I was glad next morning at breakfast to find letters from them both. Myra wrote in happier spirits than heretofore, although there was a deep undertone of sadness, evident enough to me, in all she said. Flaming Nosey had returned to the camp, and Ikey and Ina were married on the same day, and there had been great rejoicings amongst the Toons in celebration of these important events; Master Geordie's absence being the only drawback, she said, to the general pleasure. All the big boys and girls sent hearty greetings to their absent pal, and wanted to know when he was coming back, etc.

Profanoake wrote as follows:—

"Paul Dradda was tried last week in York, and sentenced by Mr Justice Coleridge to one year and nine months' imprisonment, for the alleged offence of writing blasphemous words on the rector's gate at Flamboro', and speaking blasphemously at a meeting of the fishermen in the same village. And, further, for holding blasphemous conversation with a policeman whilst he was in his custody.

"The whole history of criminal prosecution does not afford an example so shocking to humanity as this, and I have already brought it before some high official persons, in the hope of getting the sentence commuted or set aside. Petitions from the Secularists of London, Birmingham, Coventry, and other towns have been forwarded likewise to Sir George Gray, praying him to reconsider the case, on the plea of Paul's insanity, and to recommend him to her Majesty's favorable consideration.

"In the mean while, and pending these petitions, I have just learned through the post that, almost immediately after his imprisonment, he gave such unmistakable signs of madness that the Secretary's warrant was subsequently obtained to lodge him in the York Lunatic Asylum, where he now is. It took six men to hold him whilst his head was being shaved, and the felon's dress put upon

him; and the excitement consequent upon this procedure was the immediate cause of his insanity. The case has excited great interest in the county, and the press has begun to take it up in earnest. But not a religionist has yet moved in it. The 'Yorkshireman,' alluding to this fact, puts it thus: 'Mr. Profanoake is a leader among the English Secularists. He has felt interested in the case, however, not because Dradda is a Secularist (which he is not), but upon broader and higher grounds. If there be any regret that it has fallen to the lot of a Secularist to take up the case, it must simply be a regret that no Christian undertook the generous and Christian task.'

"I do not envy the Rector of Flamboro' his feelings nor his position in this matter, and he may be assured that this prosecution will do more injury to the Christian religion than a hundred such as he could do good in the preaching of a lifetime.

"I have full hope, however, that I shall yet be the means of getting Paul's sentence annulled."

When I had read this letter, I handed it over to the colonel with a full explanation of all the circumstances of the case.

"I could n't have believed it, sir, — I could n't, by the teeth!" he said, "if I had n't seen it down here in black and white. And this man a parson too! and a guardian of little Sunshine, by the teeth!"

"Well, colonel," I replied, "the inhumanity of this prosecution, and the gross insolence which has characterized the Rector's conduct on many recent occasions — the details of which I will not weary you by reciting — are some of the reasons which induced Miss Violet to refuse to meet him this morning; and I think you will agree with me that she acted as a gentlewoman and a Pierpoint should act."

"I entirely agree with you, sir," he rejoined; "and I 'm sorry, sir, by the teeth, sir! I 'm more than sorry! that my kinsman, Graham, should have been such a fool as to listen to the sanctimonious hypocrite, and send the crazy blasphemer to trial."

"But, Uncle Joe!" said Mrs. Davenport, "can you make no interest for him with the Duke's people? Do try what the young lord, or the Duke himself, may be willing to do."

"I 'll think of it, Mrs. Davenport," said he; "for, by the teeth! it 's hard a crazy man should go to jail for writing 'Jesus Christ' upon a gate-post."

"The strangest thing, dear Uncle Joe," said Violet, "is that I wrote to Squire Graham, asking him to use his interest on Dradda's

behalf, and that I have received no reply. Mr. Percy enabled me to furnish him with ample proofs of the poor man's insanity, and I urged his interference on this ground, — as evidence obtained subsequently to the hearing of his case before the sitting magistrates."

"Well, little Violet, he 's a slow coach, you know, is the squire; but he 's a good-hearted fellow, although rather headstrong and obtuse, — you understand, by the teeth! And may be he 's at work! Who can tell?"

"I hope he is," said Mrs. Davenport, "for, as you say, Uncle Joe, it 's a hard case; and Justice Coleridge, in my opinion, ought to be called henceforth Justice Jeffries!"

CHAPTER L.

PAUL DRADDA AT LIBERTY, THROUGH PROFANOAKE AND GEORDIE AND SIR GEORGE GRAY. — THE WEDDING-DAY FIXED.

ANOTHER week had passed away after this conversation, and Violet and I found ourselves once more alone in the garden. Profanoake had in the mean while succeeded in restoring poor Paul to his old mother, and the companionship of the Flamboro' fisherman; and the press throughout the county was very severe upon the rector, denouncing him often in no measured terms, as a bigot and a tyrant, and the prosecution itself as a violation of the rights and liberties of the subject.

Whilst we congratulated ourselves, therefore, upon these issues, we were free to speak of matters which more particularly interested us.

"And so," said Violet, taking her cue from a previous conversation, "you really must leave us, dearest, to-morrow! I do not know how I shall support your absence; but you will return soon, will you not, dearest?"

"Yes," I replied; "as soon as I possibly can. And, dearest Violet! you can hasten my coming, by naming the day when I can claim you for my own beloved bride. Will you not then, dearest, name the day?"

"Oh!" she replied. "I dare not do it. How could I bear to think of the happiness of that day?"

"And yet, my own dear Violet, you must name the day some time; why not now?"

"O, I cannot, indeed I cannot."

"Then I shall have to leave you, dearest, in doubt and uncertainty. Surely you would not wish thus to part with me?"

"No, my husband! no! God knows I would not."

"Then speak the word, dearest; and believe me that no sweeter word in earth or heaven could be pronounced to me."

"To-day is Tuesday, is it not, dearest?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Then to-day month, come! and I will be ready. And now kiss me, dearest, and let me hide myself in your bosom."

No more, gentle reader! Not a word more of what passed on this occasion shall you get from my lips.

CHAPTER LI.

DE PROFUNDIS.

HOW I spent that month of absence from the old Hall, from the dear old uncle, from Violet, and the one who was dearest to her save him alone whom she was about to marry, I do not care fully to reveal. Looking back upon it, and upon the final scene, which shut down that part of my life like a wall of adamant, it seems to me in all the features of the same, like a strange, wild dream of romance and unreality. When I left the beautiful soul which was to be mine forever, enshrined in her beautiful forest home, I felt, as I wandered through the glades of Birkland, and the ruined temples, and deserted shrines of Bilhaugh, where the oaks had been alive with God for wellnigh two thousand years, and were now lone, thunder-riven and desolate, — but still crowned with the greenery of their prime, — that I was, in some unspeakable sense, guilty of satanic crimes, — that a curse had fallen upon me, through what cause or agency I knew not, — but still it was there! eating the very life out of me, as if resolved to try me to the uttermost, and test me, what manner of man I was, who could thus dare to play with the awful duality of life, and resolve the riddle in my own person. I lost myself in the forest, and gave up my soul to the tumultuous feelings which agitated it. What had I done to be thus made the sport of fiery impulses, of dread, undefinable images of terror? I sat down, as the sun set, under the vast circumference of the branches of the "Major Oak," so called by the foresters, and so known and loved by the villagers of Edwinstowe, the sweet, primitive village of Edwinstowe, the spire of whose ancient and venerable church shot up like a reed of molten fire, afar off beyond the trees skirting the forest, as the glorious, red sun went down, once more — for how many times? Here, at least, I was alone; alone with my own thoughts which so strangely troubled me, — alone, — save that from the dells of Birkland, the wild, melancholy notes of the love-lorn nightingale smote the tremulous air, and flooded all its pulses with ecstatic music. Alone! and yet not alone! For one

by one, each silently from his house in the azure, came the unsuspecting stars; and soon the whole sky was cartooned with heavenly pictures, flaming there, like a vast apocalypse; and the great, lonely moon, with eyes of unutterable sorrow, came also forth at her appointed hour, and seemed to people space with the infinitude of her glorious presence. Why did I tremble? Of what was I afraid? Where lived the man who could confront me with the charge of a mean, dishonorable deed? Such man had no existence. This I knew, this I felt in my inmost heart, and yet I trembled.

Was it that my nerves were shaken by too much anxiety and love? The thought flung me to my feet. I stretched out my arms and hands; the very sod shook beneath the trampling of my stormy heels! I knew that my nerves were all right. I felt my pulse, and tried to compel myself to believe that there was somewhere some derangement of the curious and awful mechanism of which this projection of myself, this visual embodiment of the wondrous component which I called "me," was composed. In vain. A temperate health reigned in my veins; and yet I was sorely affected within and without.

What then was wrong? Something was wrong; that was certain! Was the mind unseated? That could hardly be; for in all matters of resolution and judgment, — save in this which so overshadowed and oppressed me, and for which I had no name, nor sign of recognition, — I was competent, and of clear insight.

It was a dread, unresolvable mystery. I who had so lately come away from her I loved, so full of happy thoughts and feelings, the very air turned to balm and myrrh and frankincense, and all around me heaven, — to be thus suddenly, inexplicably, smitten with a sorrow for which there was no language and no interpretation!

What had I tried to do, in my problem of love? To reconcile Myra with Violet, and Violet with Myra! That was all. Why, in spite of myself, did the two images, the images of the two faces and the two souls of these contending and both absolutely innocent persons, mingle themselves so inextricably the one with the other, the moment that I thought of one or the other? Why would they be thus confounded, to my utter discomfiture? What devil was it that pervaded all my dreams of these, both dearly loved ones, compelling my manhood and my reason to succumb to him, without ostensible and shown cause? If I loved Myra, why not? She was worthy to be loved. I had no plot against her. My entire intercourse with her had been pure and unsullied, such as angels might know in

heaven. Only she held me, or seemed to hold me, in a grip of fire, utterly relentless in her passionate love; her madness and delirium of love, and would not let me go, — the print of her nails in my thighs, like Jacob's in those of the wrestling angel.

I loved her, — after a noble fashion, — and could not help it; she loved me also, after a fashion of her own, and could not help it! We knew each other by the unmistakable masonic sign. We were intimate, and inward with each other; and as I sat there, under the Major Oak tree, all the ubiquitous eyes of God, all the omniscient eyes of God upon me, reading me clean through and through, without disguise or concealment, I knew that to this matchless tawny, this olive-browed, gold-complexioned woman, of a race banned and forbidden to the love of me and of my race, I was wound and bound in webs whose aboriginal fibres sprang from the loins of Adam, the first man of all the races.

Had I not told her that I loved her? Had she not answered my confession with whole African sunbursts of passion? And had we not settled all that? — settled it down into a temperate acknowledgment, within temperate boundaries, so that we understood each other exactly, and without the shadow of a difference? I believed this; believed in her, and in myself; believed that she knew and comprehended the vast gulf of social and moral distinction which separated us, and forbade forever an union between us. Had not all been done and said which could be done and said to divide and separate us? Myra knew that union with me, in the only possible way wherein such union could exist between us, was outside the bounds of possibility. She knew, and was, if not satisfied, then at least, poor soul, crushed back in hopelessness upon her own great and noble heart. Had I ever, in any unguarded moment, thrown myself into her power, — exercised any power over her, save that which a great-hearted (and oh! pardon me for saying it) brother would or could have exercised, the scenery and characters of the drama would have been, or might have been, utterly different. I confess to weakness. I am not strong where I thought I was strongest. A child could fell me at times with a primrose, as Eliot said on his death-bed. But I am not guilty, in the sense of the conscience, with my beloved Myra. I love her. Of course, I love her! Who could otherwise? — And so the sky begins to lower, and the stars go out; and the moon sags towards the heavy horizon, — and I am still alone in the old forest of Sherwood, under the hospitable branches of the Major Oak.

But hark! the cry of that tawny woman comes with a wild wail from the region of the setting moon! What is it with thee, poor soul! poor afflicted soul! like me, afflicted and forsaken, what is it that aileth thee?

No answer! No reply! Then it is all a dream, and I shall yet be happy. But oh! Myra, I shall never forget thee!

As these strange, and even terrible, romances of the mind stirred me under the "Major Oak," and as I gave way to reality, and believed that my beautiful, unhappy Myra was *not* so totally lost, but that some day, under some brighter auspice, I should still claim her, as I always had done, as my sister, my beautiful sister Myra, and that she would be content to love me — the poor flint-gatherer — as her brother, and without further hope, as I had given her none, — there came also to me, as suddenly as the past anguish had come, — oh! such bright, happy, holy thoughts, inspirations, and aspirations, that I forgot all about the now dark, summer night, the moonless and starless sky, — the smoke of the reeking earth in the forest, and heard nothing by my natural consciousness, but the hooting of the owl; and felt nothing but occasionally the flapping of the heavy wings of the weary bat in my neighborhood.

And yet there was much more than that astir. She had gone, with her passionate, Semitic sunbursts, her blaze of womanly fervor, — and I rejoiced greatly, with unspeakable rejoicings, that never had I, by word or deed, gone with her beyond the silky margin of propriety and the bounds of a manly honor.

But oh! how I loved that woman! that dark-eyed, solar-souled, solar-burnt, passionate, mad woman! Even the voice in my soul that called to me — called to me out of that wild encounter, that delirium of passion — hardly, at first, reached me where it could find me. But anon it stole over me, and through me, like the breathings of sweetest spring, like the aromas of sweetest violets. "O come to me, sweetest and dearest," I said; "come to me in those breathings of violets, — of sweetest, darkest eyed Carpathian violets! for now I feel that it is my good, my best, my loveliest maiden speaking to me through her soul, like the voice of a seraph through the lattices of heaven."

And whose voice was it that I heard in the silence, after the beautiful and burning one had disappeared? Whose but that of my darling, my soul's joy and pride!

Will you, O Reader, believe this? I know that any nine out of ten of you will not only disbelieve it, but flout it, as one of the

things included in the category "*impossible!*" But, believe me, there is literally and truly no such word as impossible. It has been said before, this saying, and I have heard it smilingly. But now I *know* that what I say is true, and that "impossible" is, as Mirabeau long ago pronounced it, "a blockhead of a word!"

Why should I so long have listened to Myra, — as confessedly I did? Why should she have vanished as she assuredly did, — when all that we had to say was exhausted, and her heart was ashes with but the smouldering embers of fire, and mine a burnt-out volcano?

Answer me this, O "Impossible" Philosopher! and confess, in your inability to answer, that there ARE more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your *philosophy!*

O beautiful it was to me to hear that sweet, clear, ringing voice, — that voice of my beloved, my soul's idol, my all in all! And yet it was sad to hear it. The great, unspeakable curse, the curse which I had never evoked, — which was with me, ay or no, — which would not pass away, — the bitterer curse than the bloody sweat or the inexorable cup! — why would it not pass away? Had not I, too, drank to the very lees all that could embitter life, and poison love, and tear the laurels from immortality? Had I, or had I not?

She said "No!" — and oh! that delicious monosyllable! mostly so sad, mostly so full of woe, and blood, and infinite sorrow! No! I had not tasted sorrow, nor the nearest waters to death. She was my morning and evening star! — the light of my path in the wilderness, — the crown of my life, — the hope of my immortality.

What if, for a moment, the gusty atmosphere of passion swept over the undying love of the soul? What if, confused and confounded, a righteous soul got entangled in the marsh and mire of an evil quag and an evil conscience! — is that a just cause to cut down the righteous soul? And if, entangled it knows not how, in a web which does not mean to be unkind or harsh, it does no wrong, but seeks, by noblest means, to unhand itself of its obstructions, — shall the legal and absolute hand adjudge the same to the same punishment as that which is made for the guilty?

Such were the thoughts, and such the literal talkings, which occurred to me under the mighty branches of the "Major Oak" tree, as I, recreant and untrustful, sought its shadow under the awful stars of that ever-memorable night.

I am not here on confession. Not that I have so very much to confess, but that — although 't is said confession is good for the soul — I prefer to confess to her only whom my soul loveth.

A month after the time I asked for preparation, and sought and gained Violet's sanction, I was on my way back to the old Hall, from which I hoped never more to wander. But still, strange as it may appear, I was tossed by endless doubtings and agonies. I could not quell the demon which had taken possession of me. He was lordly and masterful. When I thought he was utterly subdued, and under my feet, — as I indeed thought he was after that sweet voice of my beloved broke upon my solitude in the forest, — I have found him more and more tremendous, and more and more triumphant. Could I but fasten on him, — grip him in my fists, — hold him until I could throw and fall upon him, — there were an end of his sovereignty! But no such thing is possible. I cannot grasp him, and I cannot lay him. He is a coward incarnate, or he takes advantage of his power to crush the weak. My friend! you who laugh, and think how easy it is to throw a strong man, step on this side, and I will put you to an antagonist who will grind you to a literal powder whilst you are preparing to laugh at him.

I rose from my seat, at last, under the tree. It was wellnigh the prime. I had sat out the evil dreams, and the evil powers, and the evil birds. I had suffered; but why not? Man is born to suffer, — to suffer and to bear! But woe to the man by whom his suffering cometh! — Ah! well-a-day! I am sorry for the words. It does not become me to be revengeful. I will wait, and leave wrong-doers to Nemesis.

But for Violet, my Violet! she for whom I came so far, and did so much! — yes, did so much! why should I shame to record it, — when she would not shame to record her kisses given to me, — she, — my darling!

Ah, woe is me! I cannot think of her without seeming to do her wrong. I have plighted my faith, and pawned my soul to her. She is my better, nobler, more beautiful self; my infinitely better self! and I were mad to sacrifice her to or for anything or person unworthy of her. Do I not feel when she is nigh, that God and his holy angels are in that presence? Do I not bow down in very reverence when her name is wafted on the winds which pass me?

But they say that she is rich and I am poor; and that I seek her as a fortune-hunter seeks a fortune. I know they say it. Perhaps they believe it. Vulgar souls cannot get any higher than that. But she knows! What is fortune to a man like me? I never cared much for money, — never ached after it, until I knew her; and the reason was because she was rich and I was poor. But that is a test,

a sufficient, and palpable test! If she cares for the money, I am not her man; if she don't, then may God help me! for I don't know, in my great strait, what to do.

Often I have thought of it, and think of it still,—she always came to me whilst I read in the library, when there was a legitimate chance. Then there was no betrayal of consciousness; no sign that she was an heiress, and I, a poor man of letters, or, as the gypsies' children would call me, "our stone gatherer."

We were simply all in all to each other, without let or question, save from the ever-present, ever-beseeching eyes of Myra, which were the Agrippa's mirror of my destiny.

CHAPTER LII.

THE RUINED VAULTS OF THE ABBEY IN THE FOREST. — BIG TOON AGAIN. — MYRA'S DEATH, AND RESURRECTION AT THE MARRIAGE WITH VIOLET. — THE TWO IN ONE.

I HAVE in the previous chapter set forth in such runic words as seem to belong to the subject the disorganization of my ideas and feelings upon the great question which was agitating my mind respecting my marriage with Violet, involving as it did the casting of poor Myra into the outer darkness, where there is no hope. It is true, I had deliberately entered into an engagement with Violet to become my wife; that I knew what I was about when I did this; that I knew, also, to what fate I was consigning the beautiful gypsy. This, however, was no fault of mine; but still I was perpetually haunted by her image, and an ominous dread fell over my soul like an abiding atmosphere.

My time was up, however, and I was once more on my way to the old Hall in the forest. My mother and sister, the only friends I had in the world belonging to my blood, had, some days previously, been guests at Violet's home, — waiting for the time when the wedding was to come off. I drove my old favorite mare over the bridge which leads the wayfarer into the village of Edwinstowe; and stopping at the rural hostelry hard by the bridge on the right hand side, I gave my horse to the landlord, — a big, burly fellow in his shirt-sleeves, with a most ruddy face and rubicund nose, indicating deep potations and a hearty enjoyment of life. I had known him long time before. His house was the usual stopping-place of travellers, and of those who came to see the curiosities of the village; for there were such in Edwinstowe, namely, a first-class entomologist, who had one of the best and rarest private cabinets in the kingdom, — a man whom the noble-hearted Earl of Ripon, formerly Lord Goderich, and my friend, delighted to honor. A sculptor, and a painter, who was also a writer, — and to this last the village was deeply indebted for many educational advantages, which originated in his heart and house.

"Well, Lomas!" said I, as I descended from the gig, "what 's up? Any news astir? Any poaching affray turned up lately? Or is all quiet, according to the wont, custom, and character of this village?"

"Nothing up perticlar, sir," he replied; "although I 've seen Big Toon, and old Hiram, and old Brazen Nose, the prize-fighter, i' these parts for the matter of a week past."

"Ah!" said I, as carelessly as you like, "where do they hang out? And, by the way, have they got none of the pretty tawnies with them?"

"None that I knows on, maester. I did n't stop to chaffer wi' 'um, but driv' by, as if they was welcome to these parts, — which you 'd better believe they ain't, no how you can fix it!"

"And why not, Lomas? why should n't they have the right to build their tents in the highways and byways of old England? Especially hereabouts in the forest, where they are as completely buried as if they were in a haunted graveyard?"

"Folkes differs about that, maester," he said; "I niver liked them gypsy chaps i' my life; they are such darned thieves and rakehellies."

"I never found them so," said I, "although I know that is their character. But where do you say they are camped?"

"Out on the common, anent the church, maester; just under the gorse-bushes what flank the forest thereaway. And a pretty sight it be to see them gorse-bushes just now, I tell you. They 'se all i' full bloom, and the air 's full of their sweetness."

"All right, Lomas! I shall see them by and by; and in the mean while suppose we go into the house, and try a flagon of your best beer, and a lunch of bread and cheese."

"Wi' all my heart, sir. I 'se got a cheese i' cut as is a cheese; it 's bin under the tap o' 'old Bolt,' my strongest ale, for six months, and it 's as mellow as if it had been soaked i' claret, as Squire Ingham soaks his'n, when he means to hev 'um tip top i' the tasten!"

So in we went to the great open kitchen, the floor of which was sprinkled with clean sawdust, — the tables and trenchers being scoured as white as snow, and the walls stuck about with ballads and rude-colored pictures. The old woman of the house was dozing in her arm-chair as we entered, — the old cat was purring on the hearthstone, — and the great dinner-pot was boiling and seething and bubbling on the iron pot-hook over the large, bright coal-fire.

We had not long to wait for the beer and bread and cheese, — and we both did ample justice to these good things so pleasantly set before us.

"Have you heard any news from the Hall, Lomas?" I asked, draining the last drop in the quart-mug before me.

"Well," he said, "they do say as how Miss Violet is goin' to be married; but it ain't sartain, nohow. The likes o' uz don't get to know the truth from the likes o' them."

"Ah!" said I, "who is to be the happy man?"

"That's more nor I can tell, maester. They do say he comes from Yorkshire,—but nobody knows, bless you! for sartain."

"Well, Lomas," I replied; "I want to leave the bonny little mare in your charge for a few days. I'm going to pay a visit to these parts, and don't wish to trouble my friends," said I, by way of hiding my purpose, "to keep my horse as well as myself."

"All right, sir," he answered. "I'll tak good care o' her,—and she pays a chap for groomin' and grubbin' her. You've worked her pretty hard o' late, maester, and she looks a bit weary and tucked up. When you see her agen, she'll be as bright and smart as a steel-trap, or I'se no ostler!"

"I am content to leave her to your care, Lomas," I replied; and in a short time I lit my pipe, and turned into the long and narrow main street towards the church, intending to take the shortest cut to the forest, where the landlord told me Big Toon and some of his pals had their tents.

Strange and harassing thoughts disturbed and perplexed me as I approached the little tawny colony. I had hardly left the village, and its quaintly sculptured, most ancient, and most venerable church built in the times of the Saxons, before I beheld the blue wreaths of smoke from my old pals' camp-fire rising amidst the bright greenery of the forest trees. Old memories also came over me of times long since gone by, when I was in my teens, and used to walk from T—d, a little market town in Nottinghamshire, once or twice a week, at least, during the summer, to enjoy the refreshing influences of these strange, solemn, and beautiful woods. As I now advanced nearer and nearer to the camp, I was literally overpowered with the odors which came from the golden blossoms of the gorse. The air was surcharged with them, and nothing could be finer or more picturesque than the sight of that wide-stretching sea of fire which the gorse-bushes resembled as they flanked the approaches to old Bilhaugh (that part of the forest, so called, which is crowded for several miles with ruined oaks fourteen and fifteen centuries old). The contrast between these gray, gnarled, and knotted old oaks, still alive and vigorous in greenery, with the tall, wiry, spiked gorse-

bushes, also in vigorous bloom, which seemed to throw the oaks far back as if they were put into some prison of enchantment, was a superb picture. It was in the middle of the morning, and the air was hot with the burning sunlight, and not a cloud floated in the infinite azure of the sky.

Whilst I was yet at some distance from the camp, I heard the barking of the well-known dogs; and as I drew nearer and nearer, one of the smaller terriers ran towards me, and when within about twenty paces of me, he pulled up suddenly, and stood there barking with all the fervor and anger which he could put into his little tongue. As I proceeded, he began to snuff the air, and bark less furiously. He had evidently scented a friend in the wind, or one he took to be such, but was not quite certain about it. At last, however, all doubts vanished out of his canine reason, and he came bounding towards me, whining and wagging his tail, and twisting his body into all sorts of contortions, still barking loudly, but this time with a welcoming God bless you! I stooped down to caress him; and as I rose, Big Toon showed his tall, gaunt figure amongst the trees behind the tents, and in another moment he also came running towards me, and our hands were gripped together like two vices at high pressure. "Bully for you, Toon!" said I; "you know where to pick the primest spots for a summer residence, don't you, old fellow? You ought to have been a monk."

"A monk, brother! what kind of an animal is that ere? He don't run wild i' these woods, that 's sure; nor in any other woods or wilds, downs or marshes or commons that I knows on in all England."

"That 's true, my tiny little manikin! His day is over. He went out of existence just about the same time, if I reckon rightly, as the fairies vanished from the greensward; and with him went also a good deal of humbug, and what we call superstition, and nonsense, and fol-de-rols."

"I never heered on him, brother! He must have lived afore my time."

"I think he did, my wise man o' the woods! But you may take my word for it that there is not a wood nor wild, a down, common, marsh, valley, nor mountain where he was not to be found, in one shape or other, during a considerable number of centuries, in this bonny, bright land of England."

"Was he worth the hunting, brother? Was he good venison?"

"He was very fond of venison, Master Toon! and of good drinks besides, and plenty of them; and a certain bluff king who once

ruled in England — as big a rascal as ever put a crown on his head, which is saying a great deal! — thought it would be excellent sport to hunt him, — since he was no great shakes, that old monk, after all, and owned, besides, a big pile of money, and lands, and palaces, and more jewels, and vessels made of gold and silver, than you could look at, piece by piece, in twenty lifetimes."

"That cock won't fight, Master Geordie!" said Toon; "who iver heerd of a wild animal owning money and lands and t' other things, like as if he was two-legged man?"

"I did n't say he was a wild animal, good brother Toon! And yet what I did say was all true, and a king hunted him right down to death; robbed him of all his properties, and then gave away the most of them to another monk of a little different breed, whom a higher King than the king that killed the old monk is fast hunting out of the land."

"What is it all about, Geordie?" said the big gypsy fellow, my friend, looking mightily perplexed. "I can't see through the talk. Why ought I to have been a monk? Would you have me hunted out of the land too?"

"Not a bit of it, my fine fellow! I only said you ought to have been a monk, because this monk always pitched upon the prettiest spots in England on which to build his palaces, and make himself happy with his rigmaroles. Where are the boys?"

"Off amongst the villages," said Toon; "I 'm left to keep house. When you came up, I was lying amongst the grass and flowers smoking a pipe and thinking."

"Thinking of what?" said I.

"A good many things, brother. Old Mabel has had a vision, and we knows what 's coming."

A shudder crept over me at this disclosure. I remembered "The Healing Hand" scenes; but whatever misery might now come to the gypsies through me, I was in the hands of fate, and could n't help it."

"Put away the thinkings, child Toon, and come along with me through the forest. I know every glade and park, every dingle and tiny vale and cosey nook in all the forest hereabouts, and I want to show you one of the palaces which the old monk we spoke about lived in in his time."

Toon said nothing, but eyed me doubtfully. Then he took a burning stick from the fire, and lighted his pipe. After he had spoken to the dogs, he returned to my side.

"I am ready, brother," he said.

It was a long walk to the old monk's palace. We crossed the main glade which separates Bilhaugh (the forest of oaks) from Birkland (the forest of birches). They were not a stone's throw from each other, and yet their boundaries were as distinctly marked as if they had been separated by walls of adamant. The contrast was very strange, and very wonderful and striking, between the sturdy oaks and the graceful, lady-like birches. These last growing to a size, and rising upwards to a height I have never seen surpassed in trees of their kind, — their silver trunks flashing in the sunlight, — their wide-spread branches and leaves drooping with a fine modesty and beauty, trembling to every breath of wind, — looked like so many sylvan nymphs, enchanted into trees, keeping perpetual watch over the declining days of the old oak kings of the forest, each muffled up in the grandeur of centuries, on the opposite side of the broad cock-glade, so called, which separated these two realms, — the one of majesty, the other of beauty.

We talked mostly on very indifferent things by the way, and really talked for the sake of talking. Toon and I had each of us a skeleton in his heart. We passed through the forest of Budby, a forest of blackthorn, every branch laden with white blossoms of a delicious, but oppressing perfume, and the whole, looking at it from the heights whence we descended into it, having the appearance of a burning sea of snow. Budby village was just outside the forest, in the direction we were going. A few neat little Gothic cottages, with a flower-garden in front, and a patch of land behind them, for the growth of vegetables. A fine trout-stream ran close to the doors of the cottages; but, alas! no one of the foresters, keepers, lingcroppers, living there might throw a line into those waters. The Duke of Portland owned the cottages, the men, the water, and the fishes!

A mile farther on, and we were near the end of our journey.

"Toon!" said I, "are you not foot-sore, and out of patience? Don't you want to rest?"

The big fellow drew his pipe from his mouth, and, throwing out his right leg, said: "Look at him, Master Geordie! This chap and his mate have stood me a good sixty mile at one stretch, and then won me a wrastlin' match."

"Well then, Toon," I added, come down this by-path. It will lead us into as pretty a valley as you ever saw with your eyes, and I will there show you one of the monks' palaces."

In a few minutes we reached a point from which there was a full view of the valley, at the extreme end of which — on a gentle eminence — stood, amidst a superabundance of brush and birch-trees, the ruins of what was once an abbey.

"See yonder, Master Toon, away over the valley, amongst the trees, there is one of the monks' palaces I spoke about."

"Come, brother, that cheat won't do! I 'se seed scores of old stones like them, many a time, in many a place. Men-folks once lived in them old stones, when they was stuck up into houses. That I knows well enough. But a hanimal could n't build hisself a house such as that must hev been in its day."

"Did you never hear, bully Toon, any tales about the men-folks who must have lived in those stones when they were houses?"

"All sorts o' tales, brother. Some said the goblins built and lived in um; some that giants lived in um; some that great lords, like him of Portland or Newcastle, lived in um; and I once heerd a chap i' black, who cumed to the tents to make us all turn Christ-onions, that fellows who did note but pray and roar all day lived there for the sake of God and his glory."

"Some sneaking Jesuit, I'll warrant you now, was this fellow in black, Master Toon, if you could but have known it. I know the whole kit of them, and love them as the Devil loves holy water. Did n't he ask you for a sup of drink before he left you?"

"I believe he did," said Toon; "and becase his hands shook like corn i' the wind, and we was glad to get shut of him so cheap, we lifted up the whiskey-bladder, and let him drink his fill."

"Well, Toon, this man in black told you a part of the truth about the praying and howling fools as you call them who lived in those stones when they were houses. Folks in those times called them all monks, and when I spoke of the monk and his palaces, I meant the 'howling and praying fellows' in their religious houses, and those stones yonder are the ruins of one of those houses."

"Is that a true tale, Master Geordie," said Toon. "I niver could make out afore what they was. But why did you fool me, brother, about the monk?"

"I did not mean to fool you. I spoke after the manner of your own people, Toon, in a very readable kind of parable. I merely made one man stand for his particular race."

"I see, brother! But you did not bring me here just to show me them old stones, brother!"

"How do you know? What put it into your head? I'm a moody fellow, brother Toon, and don't always act like other people. Why should n't I do a thing of that sort?"

"'Case it ain't like you, Geordie! What made you bring me here, brother?"

"Let us go and look at the ruins. Who knows but we may see some old monk's ghost amongst them?. or, better still, who knows but my brother may then find out why I brought him here?"

We walked in silence along the valley until we came to the ruins. I knew them well; had spent many a happy hour by day, and by moonlight amongst them, in company and often alone. There were secrets amongst them known but to few; and these few belonged to Edwinstowe, and were my intimate friends, and they guarded them with a religious integrity. The abbey gateway was still standing,—a Norman arch with plain pillars,—and part of the walls still hung together, covered with moss and lichens, and fragrant with the breath of the delicious wall-flower. A good part of the ground plan could still be traced; and a portion of the Chapter House remained. At the east end stood, in nearly all its integrity of form and architecture, the great east window, through which a part of the forest and the deep blue overhanging sky were visible, like a newly painted landscape set in an ancient frame.

"Come, Toon, my old friend!" said I, "let us sit down here, and smoke a pipe of peace, and old remembrances. You guessed rightly that I did not bring you here just to show you these old stones; although, for my own part, they have a deep interest to me, and I love them better than I loved the old monks who once inhabited them, or the religion which they professed and taught. If I were to tell you why, my friend, you would not understand me. How do they strike you, Master Toon? What do you think of them?"

"Good to tent in on a stormy night, Master Geordie; or, on a pleasant summer day, when the Beaks' keepers is shooting their master's game. I like such a spot as this, when there is no fear of the poor gypsies bein' meddled with."

"Toon," said I, "the Christian Scriptures tell us that the carnal mind is enmity against God; and they mean to say that there are certain things which don't exactly belong to the senses, and are called by the somewhat odd name of 'spiritual,' which a man cannot see who is not spiritually discerned."

"All bosh, Master Geordie. What sense is there in them words? Talk to me and mine about what we knows; come to us to help you

out of a row, or to go a huntin' wi' you, or to do a bit o' snarin' on a moonlight night where hares is plentiful, and we 're the right sort o' chaps. But as for all that wordy nonsense about the things a chap can't see, because God has n't given him eyes to see, — it 's like askin' a blind man to read Rommany!"

"That is sound philosophy, Toon. You are a genuine autochthon! which is a very queer animal, I assure you, — queerer than a monk. But what I said is not all bosh. Don't you believe in the visions, and the Healing Hand?"

"True, brother; but what has that to do with the spiritees you talked about?"

"Both are mysteries, brother. You cannot tell by your senses, nor by your reason, what is the meaning nor what the source of those strange things."

"I cannot!" said Toon, as if suddenly struck by a new idea on the subject. "These things belong to the Great Name!"

"That 's just what I said, or meant to say, when I talked to you about the spirit*ees*, as you call the word. I don't expect, brother Toon, that I 'm ever going to make you see or think as I do, or as those of my race do. But everybody knows that there are plenty of things which he can't understand. I never understood that strange trance of Myra's, nor why these hands of mine should have done the dear girl good, being merely passed over her face and person."

"It belongs to the Great Name, Master Geordie. That 's all, that 's all!"

"Now," said I, "I can see plenty of grand things in those old stones, brother Toon; but they are hidden to your eyes, and you can't see them. If I were to tell you, what is strictly true, that many a summer's night, after six o'clock, I 've walked eight miles from my house on purpose to see these ruins alone, by moonlight, you would hardly know how to believe me, not understanding my motive. A man would not do that unless he had an equivalent pleasure for doing it, — and I had it."

Big Toon could not see it. Moonlight was good to see hares and pheasants in; ruins were good as a hiding-place o' nights, and a good lookout against a keeper's surprise, but beyond that he knew nothing of the ever-present form of the wondrous beauty that haunts the night and throws enchantment over the ruins, and makes the woods a temple for the worship of God. And yet he believed in the superstition of visions, trances, and Healing Hands.

This last might come of ignorance, but it might, also, as I believed, come of knowledge. How then? That which I know, in my own consciousness, needs no outside proofs, nor could all the Q. E. D.'s in the world, against the knowledge so known, avail one jot or tittle.

We had got somehow or other into this questioning, speculative vein, all in the most natural manner possible, and something impelled me to continue in it.

"Toon," said I, somewhat suddenly, "what was that vision of Mabel's you spoke about a while ago, as one of the things which had set you a thinking? Was there no spiritualism in that?"

"May be, Master Geordie, as you have now teld me what spiritees is, but I don't want to answer the question."

"Why not, brother? If it is good, I shall be glad to hear it, for all your sakes; if it is evil, I may help you to ward off its consequence!"

"Brother! no man can ward off the things that is to be. We hev all loved you, brother; we all love you still, for our pet Myra's sake, as well as your own. You are both sniekled in the vision."

"Thank you, my noble-hearted friend! I know you all love me, and, as God is my witness, I love you all, too,—and as for Myra! brother, did you ever doubt that I loved her as a brother should? Did you ever believe that I offered to love her otherwise than as a brother should? Tell me that."

"She has teld us all that, dear Master Geordie! we never doubted you."

"Then let me hear what Mabel's vision was!"

"Well," said Toon, shuddering through all his manly frame; "old Mabel called me and Nosey and our merry-maker Hiram to her tent floor, two weeks gone by this very day, at an early hour i' the morn, and said she had a great revealment to make to us. You know her, Geordie; you know how true all her visions comes. 'Sons of my womb and of my race!' old granny began, as she sat upright on her straw bed, amongst the blankets, looking more withered than the corpses we seed in the old graves of the old land of the Pharòhes, when we was there, twelve years gone by. Said she: 'I've seen a sight this night as hes made me older than Marygot, who died at nine hunderd! Children!' she cried, half weeping in her grief, 'I'se seen my 'ansome beauty, my pet Myra, a pale dead body in a vault, an' Geordie a bendin' over her and a claspin' her in his arms, and a cryin' over her like one mad; a cryin', and would not be comforted. I'se seen into Geordie's heart, and I know he loves Myra; the good

angellers teld me so months agone, but last night I seed it all wi' my own eyes, and the signs of it was a burning flame, — all round his heart, — a burning flame, — wi' Myra's name in it, each letter a letter of fire! And poor Myra was dead; she had died for him, because he was to be wed to another. You all know the girl; that pretty blue-eyed lady who came to hev her fortin' told, when Geordie was here along wi' us, and we was all so happy and loved him so. A pretty girl! but no more like our Myra than a fardin' candle is like the great blazing sun at midday. O my beautiful Myra! she is dead! she is dead! I knows the place, men, I knows it like a book. I sees it now, the dark, deep vault where she lies, — the roof arched, and every arch supported on a pillar of stone. It is away from here; far away, hidden in the depths of a forest. Boys, men, sons of mine! Hopes of my race! can't you save our darling Myra?' And the old woman," said Toon, his eyes streaming with tears, "turned to us all with such a sad look as made our hearts ache. Then she continued: 'No, boys! you can't none on you help her. It is all down in the book, and it is signed by the Great Name.'"

When Toon had done speaking he hid his fine, sunburnt face in his hands, and as for me, my heart heaved tumultuously, and I wept aloud. During that dreadful silence and agony, — for I felt that, as sure as God lived, all that vision would be dreadfully realized, — and whilst I was in the act of rising to go away and conceal my weakness, there came up from the secret depths of the earth, as it seemed, such a terrible, wild wail of despair and pain, and unspeakable suffering, as struck me down like a man suddenly paralyzed in his body and soul. Toon, less moved, and not nervous as I was, — for I knew I had grown into an absolutely morbid state during the last two months, — sprang to his feet, listened with staring eyes and with nerves of steel, his whole system concentrated into a focus of intensest susceptibility to all sound and movement, — hanging breathlessly on the pauses of the soft blowing wind, — intent only on recalling that wail, or any indication of it, that he might fly to the place from whence it proceeded, and rescue the sufferer.

Who was that sufferer? Was it possible that this was but a repetition — in another and more sorrowful way — of my forest experiences as I sat, one short month ago, under the branches of the Major Oak? I felt sure, in my own heart, that what I then heard was no mockery, no delusion, but her voice coming to me in its agony. And now in the deepest depths of my soul I felt that this wail, just deliv-

ered to us both, — to Toon and myself, — came from the same broken heart.

Toon broke my reverie. "Brother," said he, "whose voice was that?"

I arose from the ground trembling like a leaf, and took the brave, loving fellow's hand. "As God lives, my brother," I answered, "it was Myra's!"

"Then she is here somewhere amongst these ruins," said he, preparing to search them.

"Stop," said I. "That is hardly possible. Neither you nor I knew three hours ago that we were coming here, although I had an object in bringing you here, and it is unreasonable to suppose that she should anticipate our movements, and be here before us, when — as we both believe — she is far away from here."

"It is all in the great book, Master Geordie! And what 's there can't be rubbed out. Fate is fate. Why did you bring me here?"

"To show you a place of concealment, brother, where you and yours might lie till doomsday, and no one interfere with you, or know where you were. You sometimes stand in need of such a place."

"True, good brother! But I know of a hundred places more secure than this."

"Than this! certainly, Brother Toon! Do you think I 'm so green as to ask you to ensconce yourselves here amongst these ruins, which can be seen from a dozen different places on the heights?"

"Where, then, is the hiding-place you speak of, brother?"

"Beneath these ruins! in fine, large, vaulted chambers!"

"Vaulted chambers! Here amongst these ruins in this forest! If you love me and Myra, dear brother, and our people, show me these chambers. What! don't you remember Mabel's vision? Think! recall what I said. The death of the darling of our tribe in a vaulted chamber, — arched, — pillared, — far away from the place of the vision!"

For a moment I was dumbfounded, paralyzed, with a feeling of unutterable horror. The words of Mabel, in my terror at the sound of that wailing voice, had never occurred to me. Now they came back upon my heart like dreadful breakers; and here I felt that the beginning of the end was drawing nigh. I stared madly at Toon; and beckoning him to follow, I bounded a few paces to the floor where the altar had once stood. Here, stooping down, half blinded with tears, to feel for the stone, which led down by a flight of steps

to the chambers below, I found, to my amazement, as soon as I could comprehend the thing, that the stone was already removed, hitched more than three fourths away from its solid and secret position.

"Toon!" I cried, "this is a bad business. Some one has been here before us. My God, if she should be here in this grave below!"

In a moment more the stone was thrown over on to the altar floor, and we descended to the dark chamber. It was but a dozen steps or so, and the first thing to do was to get a light. A kind of twilight there was in the vaults, coming from chinks and fissures in the stones from the roof and sides, and in one place I knew there was a large slab which could be removed at pleasure from below, so as to admit both light and air. But I could not find it in the dark. Toon busied himself with collecting sticks as near the opening at the steps as he could place them, and then struck a light and applied it to the fuel. In the mean while, I had groped about here and there and everywhere, calling aloud to any one who might be below to answer,—but not daring to pronounce Myra's name. The fire illuminated but a little part of that noble chamber. But we could see the lordly arches crossing and supporting each other, resting upon massy pillars; and the lights and shadows were grand and Salvator-Rosa-like, and would on any other occasion have filled me with fine emotions. But now there was one absorbing feeling in both Toon's mind and my own. The old woman's vision, the strange, mysterious cry amongst the ruins, urged us to complete the task we had undertaken, and discover, at least, whether or no that cry was illusion.

I tried for a long while, or what seemed to be such, to discover the friendly slab which was to let in light upon our darkness, and just as I was about to give it up, I saw a glimmering of light in the side wall, and in a few seconds more the whole vaulted room was exposed to view.

Before I had time to speak after I had removed the slab, Toon called to me in a voice husky and half choked, and in a dreadful kind of whisper, "Brother! brother! quick, come quick!"

I hastened to where he lay; for he was prostrate on the floor, with his head bowed down over the bosom of a woman. Who that woman was I knew all through my being; and in a moment I was there, pushing him, nay, half hurling him from his place, and catching the breathless form into my arms, I hugged her closely, madly to my heart, calling her name, vainly kissing her cold lips, trying to infold her in my own body and soul, that I might bring her back to life.

In vain! in vain! It was all over. It was my darling Myra whom I held in my arms. It was her name that went up to God on my lips, that it might move him, in his great compassion and loving-kindness, to give her back to life. And then, when I felt how utterly hopeless it all was, I sank down utterly exhausted, utterly desolate, into a temporary death.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE WEDDING. — THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE.

HOW Toon and I parted, and what we said to each other, and how we two lonely, broken-hearted men, bore the beautiful corpse of our beloved Myra, at midnight, to the camp near Edwinstowe, where we met that merry old Hiram, never to be merry any more, and that brave, fighting Nosey, never to fight any more, — it would be bootless to tell. Enough to say that we carried there the dear, dear girl! and that I ran off, far away from the scene of all this trouble and desolation, after leaving apologies at the Hall, — well enough sustained hereafter, — for my absence, which occupied more than another month.

During that time I wrote to Violet, and told her faithfully what had happened, neither more nor less; told her how unhappy the whole drama had made me; how utterly unfit I felt, under my present feelings, to become her husband, not, as I told her, that I had ever swerved for a moment from my allegiance to her, but that the love, the undying love of this dear girl, had so affected me that it seemed like an act of sacrilege to unite myself to any one else with my present feelings. I was more than half resolved, I said, to die single, and alone, in spite of my love for her, the only one whom I had ever really loved, — in attestation of my reverence for the beautiful dead, who had literally died for me.

I wrote the same to my sister and mother, who were still at the Hall. And in a short time, I received such letters from them as set me seriously a thinking. I had written also very faithful, sincere letters to Violet's aunt and uncle, and they also replied to me in a totally different spirit to what I had expected. They would all be glad to see me at the old forest home. They knew my history thoroughly, what I must have gone through, and what I must have suffered. They were all sure that I had allowed my sense of honor to overcome all reason and conscience, in regard to my other engagements, which belonged to my affections, in which my whole life was

concerned, and the happiness also of her I loved, and of those who loved her and me.

What could I do under such circumstances? The past could never be recalled. My own, my beautiful Myra, my sister, my beloved friend, — she could never be recalled to life. So, with many compunctions I wended my way once more to the old Hall in Sherwood.

I forbear to say one word about my interview with Violet, after this absence, or what transpired by way of explanation between me, and my own people, and between me and Myra's people. All I need say is, that everything was settled and adjusted to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

So at last the wedding-day was fixed. I am a bad hand at describing the proceeding and accessaries of such a day as this. All I remember of it, indeed, is that my dear sister and my darling's aunt sat in the same carriage with me and my darling, as we went to Edwinstowe Church to be married. May I not call her my darling, old friend? — you who have doubted of all such feelings as impel the utterance of the word, and call them nonsense and trumpery, until your heart is at present like a burnt-out volcano? Yes! and you will yet pat me on the shoulder, and say, "Well done, old fellow!" and I in my turn shall yet pat you on the shoulder, and say, "Make haste, old fellow, before it is all done on your part."

Well, another carriage contained my dear old mother, — God bless her! — and the rich old military East Indian uncle; and so we went to church.

I have no heart to talk again about the landscape, — remembering what I do of that terrible day. But you, who read this, and have read what has gone before it, will hardly forget how rich, bright, sunny, and golden it was.

We arrived at the church, — an event worth noting in any man's history! We descended from the carriages, my mother and the Major, my sister and the bride, her aunt and myself. It was a very plain, every-day church inside, — although outside it was remarkable for its sculpture and architecture. The moment I set my foot in it, I felt the same dreadful feeling come over me that had taken possession of me in the forest when I heard that frightful wail, as I sat under the Major Oak. I knew then that something terrible was about to happen, and as I led my beautiful bride to the altar, I said to her, "Darling! I am not myself. Whatever happens, until we

are bound together as man and wife. I beseech you heed it not." My darling looked into my eyes with her own bright, beautifully blue eyes, — so full of trust, of holy calm, and of unspeakable blessedness, — that I felt like a new man, and capable of bearing any amount of discomfiture. We approached the altar: half the service was read over us: it came at last, "Will you have this man for your wedded husband?" and a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, as it appeared to me, answered, "No!" Violet screamed with anguish; and I bent over her, to comfort her, beseeching her to be calm, and to answer boldly, "yes," or "no," as her own heart dictated.

Again the priest put the awful question, with a voice still more firm and solemn, — and we all waited in the dread silence for an answer.

At last, after a few seconds had flown, Violet placed her hand in mine, and cried aloud, "Yes, sir! I will!" Then again came an awful shriek through the long-drawn aisles, and I felt a whisper in my ears: "Don't, Geordie! don't, for God's sake! and for mine! Live for me! Live for your most unhappy Myra!"

Dreadful thoughts and feelings struggled within me for a few moments, and only for a few moments. I had done no harm to poor, dear Myra! I would to God I could have helped her. But that was beyond my power. What then was to prevent me from declaring myself wholly and solely hers who had come to wed me at the altar?

Nothing. So I said to Violet, "Dearest, never fear! This is a sadder ordeal than I had at first imagined. No matter for that. Trust me to the end. Come what will, no power on earth shall separate me and you, as true, faithful lovers in God's name, and we will be man and wife."

The terrible shriek in the church had been heard by all; and the clergyman, who saw that I was deeply moved by it, and was evidently talking to Violet about it, paused a few moments in order to give us time for decorum. Long before this, however, and before I had got half a word with my beloved, my mother and sister, had her in their arms and hearts, and were trying to persuade her that it was an ugly designed fright, made by some miserable gypsy, whom Master Geordie had offended.

Violet knew better than that, after she had heard the words which I had spoken to her. She knew there was something more in them than I had chosen to reveal, and she, the darling! was content to trust me.

So, once more the clergyman approached the edge of the altar, and looking straight into my eyes, he said, "Will you have this woman for your wedded wife?" I was down one step below Violet, as he said this; and by an instinctive movement, I arose mounting a head and shoulders over her tiny person, and said emphatically, "Yes, sir! I will!"

As I said this, I felt a shadowy hand on my shoulder, and I saw right before me, between me and the clergyman, the bright, beautiful black eyes of Myra gleaming upon me.

I shrunk back. "What do you want with me, Myra," I exclaimed, all consciousness, except of her presence, completely blotted out of me. "Wed her not, Geordie! You do not love her. You love me, and me only!" this was her answer.

I replied: "Myra, you know how much I loved you. You know how far my heart was yours, and how vastly short it fell of being yours, after I knew Violet. I never did you wrong, Myra, knowingly. I have suffered bitterly because I knew and loved you. I could not help loving you. If you were now a living being, I should love you just as much as ever I did. I would do everything for you that a dear brother and friend should do. But now, I charge you, unhand me! leave me! do not step between me and my heart's and my soul's love! Remember that you have no word to hold me; that I have done all I could for you; that I have loved you dearly; that once, in my agony, I had nearly died for you. Be just. Do not interfere with me."

All this passed as a sort of by-play, unknown to any one, and in a moment. Again, therefore, the priest stepped forward and presented the marriage-ring. I took it into my hand and put it upon Violet's finger. But my part of the proceeding was merely mechanical. The moment I took the ring between my forefinger and thumb, that moment I was confounded in all my wits; I could not discern anything; I knew not what I was about, or where I was. A mighty confusion possessed my mind. Seemed it to me that I was marrying Myra, and not Violet; that Myra was not dead, but living, and had come to claim me at the altar, — no one else being present but her and me and the priest.

At length the words necessary to accompany the ring, and make the marriage legally binding, according to the forms of the Church of England, were put into my mouth, as it were, by the priest, and I uttered them! all the while believing that I was uttering them to Myra! uttering them, and could not gainsay them. Sure I am, that

she, Myra, was with me from first to nearly the last; that I saw no one as my bride, but her; and that when the responding words from the bride came, I felt quite sure that those words were Myra's. Nay, stranger than all, when Violet's uncle and aunt, and my own dearest mother and sister, came to congratulate me that I had married so good and beautiful a woman, I looked aghast at them, trembled before them, and sank fainting at the foot of the altar.

When I returned to consciousness, I found that my head was pillowed on Violet's bosom; that my dearest friends were all around me, and that for to bless me.

But I have never ceased to think, after a happy life of nearly ten years, that on my wedding-day I was a bigamist, and married Myra as well as Violet.

CHAPTER LIV.

TEN YEARS AFTER THE EVENT.

HOW came Myra in that vaulted chamber? I know not. She had long left the camp; gone, no one knew whither. By her own instincts, or through the inscrutable agency of that supernatural gift which was assuredly hers, as well as Mabel's, she had divined my proposed marriage, and had come into the forest in order that she might be present at the ceremony. This is what I suppose to have been the case. But how she came to be possessed of the secret of the vaulted chamber I cannot tell; nor do I know whether she destroyed herself, or whether her own passions destroyed her.

Looking back upon the whole series of events in connection with this dreadful part of my history, they appear to be like the phantasmagoria of a dream. There are many, I know, who will give no kind of belief to the supernatural passages which I have recorded in the previous pages; to all such, I have no further word to offer. I have lived more than half the life of a man, and have learned a good deal in that time; have learned never to scoff at what I do not understand; and to believe that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy; and that we are truly such stuff as dreams are made of, and that our little life is rounded by a sleep.

THE END.

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